CHOICE NOTES

ON THE

GOSPEL OF S. LUKE,

DRAWN FROM OLD AND NEW

SOURCES.

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Saint Luke the Evangelist.

The Collect.

Almighty God, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul; may it please Thee, that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine, delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. LUKE.

Luke of Antioch, a physician by profession, as his writings indicate, was skilled in the Greek language. He was a disciple of the Apostle Paul, and his companion in all his journeys. He wrote the Gospel, of which S. Paul himself speaks; "We have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches" (2 Cor. viii. 18). Some think, that, when S. Paul in his Epistles, speaks thus, "According to *my* Gospel" (Rom. ii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 8), he refers to the work of S. Luke; and, moreover, that S. Luke was instructed not only by S. Paul, who had not companied with Christ in the flesh, (*a minister of the Word*, though not an eye witness, Verse 2), but also by the other Apostles; a fact, which he asserts in the preface to his Gospel, *As they delivered them, &c.* He therefore wrote his Gospel, as he had heard; but he composed his Acts of the Apostles, as he had seen.—*S. Jerome.*

Whatever you read here, whether concerning God, the

Saviour, the Spirit of God, the holy Angels, or the followers of Christ, read it for the purposes of admiration, repentance, faith, growth in knowledge, and of "doing the Will of God." Whatever defect, or evil, you perceive in any of the characters, here presented to you, take it, as a warning. Does the narrative conduct your attention to a variety of circumstances, which took place in connection with our Lord and His Apostles? Consider yourself interested in such circumstances, and, as it were, placed in the midst of them: for instance, when it is said in S. Mark x. 49, "He calleth thee," think, Jesus calleth *you;* or, so treasure up by meditation the particulars of each transaction, that some general useful instruction may be the result. Does any good and cheering consideration arise in your heart, any sweet and tender emotion? Turn yourself with it to your Saviour, just as if you were one of those, who personally conversed with Him, when He was upon earth. Thus will you acquire a readiness in communing with Him by ejaculation and prayer, better than from the use of any devotional Manual; though I have no wish to depreciate such prescribed and valuable helps. God grant us more and more light and strength out of the fulness of the Beloved, in whom He hath graciously made us accepted! Ps. lxxxv. 8; 1 Sam. xii. 7.—*Bengel.*

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1.—It is a singularity in S Luke's Gospel, that it has *a Preface:* and how much is contained in this short Preface. We are cautioned against erroneous, or defective, statements of the Truth; we are directed to the Apostles, whose credibility lieth in their having been *eye witnesses and ministers of the word;* we trace the faithfulness of the Evangelists, as receivers of the Word from the Apostles, and in deposit for the Church, having themselves also *a perfect understanding of all things from the very first.* In regard to ourselves, we see, how "faith cometh by hearing," first taught by Catechetical *vivâ voce* instruction, then confirmed by the written Word —written expressly that *we might know the certainty of those things, wherein we have been instructed* (Prov. xxii. 6; Acts xviii. 25; Gal. vi. 6). Finally, the name of *Theophilus* imports the temper of mind, which God will bless in the Scripture student. "Charity edifieth:" (1 Cor. viii. 1): and, who are the *most excellent* of the earth, but they, whose minds are most imbued with this Divine love, with this knowledge of the Lord?—*J. Ford.*

S. Luke had no authority to suppress these other Gospels; nor doth he reprehend, or calumniate, them; but he writes the Truth simply, and leaves it to outwear falsehood: and so it hath. Moses' rod hath devoured the conjuror's rod, and S. Luke's story still retains the Majesty of the Maker; and theirs "are not." Acts v. 38.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 2.—In Christianity there can be no concerning truth, which is not ancient; and whatsoever is truly new is certainly false. 1 Cor. xv. 3.—*Bp. Pearson.*

No man is to make a religion for himself, but to receive it from God: and the teachers of the Church are not to make religion for their hearers, but to show it only, as received from God. Acts xvi. 17; 1 Cor. xi. 2; (1 Tim. iv. 16—"*The,*" not *thy,* doctrine).—*Dr. Whichcote.*

V. 4.—It is a just matter of regret, that our translators did not retain the Greek word, *Catechized,* here and in other passages, instead of introducing the more indefinite expressions, *instructed,* and "taught." Thence it is, that people have lost sight of the Scriptural grounds for this most excellent method of sowing the first seeds of religious truth; a method, universally adopted in the early Christian Church, and so necessary to prepare the mind to "hear sermons." For (as Abp. Usher observes) "The neglect of Catechizing is the frustrating the whole work of the Ministry." Ps. xxxiv. 11; Acts xviii. 26; 1 Cor. xiv. 9; Gal. vi. 6.—*J. Ford.*

V. 5.—Thus early, in narrating the birth of the forerunner, and then the Incarnation and Nativity of the Lord, does S. Luke redeem his pledge given, that he would write *in order.* Hereby, moreover, he shows, that he had *perfect understanding of all things from the very first.*—*J. Ford.*

A certain priest—daughters of Aaron. The application of the symbol of "the Calf" to S. Luke is a matter more clear and decisive; inasmuch as the consent of the

ancient writers is more strong on this point, than on the two before mentioned (Ezek. i. 5, 10). This sacerdotal animal implies atonement and propitiation; and this exactly corresponds with what is supposed to be the character of S. Luke's Gospel, as one, which more especially conveys mercy to the penitent. And we may observe what a deep and mysterious view this consideration at once opens into the subject of the Gospel. For it seems to imply that all the calls to humiliation, which pervade it, the many incidents of mercy, and the miracles of peculiar compassionateness, recorded in S. Luke, all arise out of, and have some close and peculiar connection with, the Sacrifice of Christ. And doubtless all such, which may be considered the peculiar tenets of our religion, are but streams, which flow from this one great and secret fountain-head; all partake of their hue and character from this principle; and all the parts of the Gospel may be considered, as varied manifestations of Christ Crucified. xxiv. 25–27; 44–46.—*I. Williams.*

V. 6.—*Righteous before God, walking, &c.* As, according to the flesh, he was sprung from Aaron, so he could trace his descent, spiritually, to the father of the faithful, as walking in the steps of that great Patriarch by a participation in his faith, to whom it was said; "*Walk before Me;* and be thou perfect." Gen. xvii. 1; Rom iv. 12; Gal. iii. 7–10.—*J. Ford.*

Beloved, not in any moral integrity, not in keeping the conscience of an honest man generally, but in using well the means, ordained by Christ in the Christian Church, am I justified. Acts ii. 47.—*Dr. Donne.*

The ordinances. God communicates Himself with great variety to His Saints, now in this ordinance, and now in that, on purpose that He may keep up the esteem of all in our hearts. Take heed therefore, Christian, thou neglectest any one duty. How knowest thou, but *that* is the door, at which Christ stands, waiting to enter into thy soul? S. John xx. 26; 2 Thess. iii. 16.—*Gurnall.*

By "walking in the *ordinances,*" they walk likewise "in all the *commandments* of the Lord;" *that* being the means, whereby they did *this.* Ps. lxxxiv. 1–7.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

V. 8.—*In the order of his course.* The particular arrangements, relating to Ministerial attendance in the Temple Service, here adverted to, were of human institution; and yet we see that they were accepted of God. They were, moreover, prescribed and authorized by the Civil magistrate (1 Chron. xxiii). These two facts severally confirm what is asserted in the thirty-fourth and thirty-seventh Articles of our Church; namely, that "Every particular, or National, Church, hath authority to ordain ceremonies, &c.," and that the King's Majesty hath the chief power in matters Ecclesiastical, as well as Civil (2 Kings xxiii. 4; xviii. 4; 1 Kings ii. 26, 27). We have a still more express and authoritative confirmation of these truths at S. John x. 22; where we find (not, as here, an Angel, but) the Lord of Angels "beautifying with His presence," the Feast of Dedication, another observance of mere human institution, appointed also by the Civil magistrate (1 Macc. iv. 59; 2 Macc. x. 8). What then is the Christian's duty? "Submit yourself

to every ordinance *of man* for the Lord's sake, whether it be to *the King*, as Supreme." "The King, in the character of the Vicar of the King of Kings, is appointed for this end; that he may honour the kingdom, the territory, and the people of God, govern them, and defend them from all injury." This is a translation of the form, in Latin, of the old Saxon Laws of this kingdom.—*J. Ford.*

V. 10.—A Christian congregation, calling upon God with one heart and one voice, and in one reverend and humble posture, looks as beautiful, as "Jerusalem, which is at peace with itself." Acts ii. 1.—*I. Walton.*

Of these sweet ingredient perfumes (Petition, Confession, and Thanksgiving), is the *incense* of Prayer composed, and by the Divine fire of love it ascends unto God, the heart and all with it; and, when the hearts of the Saints unite in joint prayer, the pillar of sweet smoke goes up the greater, and fuller. Cant. iii. 6; Rev. viii. 3. —*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 11.—*An Angel standing, &c.* In a Church there are two assemblies; one of Angels, the other of men. . . Angels are present at our prayers, and they pray with and for us. Verse 19; 1 Cor. xi. 10; Rev. i. 4; viii. 1–4.—*Origen.*

V. 13.—The holy Angels of God are the observers of our *prayers* and good actions on earth, and the relaters and remembrancers of them in heaven. Not but the all seeing God of Himself knows, and takes notice of, all the good actions of men, and records them to perpetuity in

the most faithful register of His Omniscience; but He would have His Holy Angels to be conscious of our good actions; not only that they might congratulate our happiness, as fellow-servants and members with us, under Christ, their and our Lord and Head; but also, and especially, that they might be the witnesses of His righteous judgment at the last Day, when His Son shall come in His Glory, with millions of His Holy Angels, to judge the world. xv. 10; Acts x. 4; Rev. viii. 3, 4; Tobit xii. 2.—*Bp. Bull.*

The prayer of Zacharias was for the peace and salvation of Israel. It is heard. The Saviour is indirectly announced; and then "more grace" is given, by the promise, made to him, of a son in his old age, who should "prepare the way of the Lord." Two most consoling truths are thus confirmed; first, that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly, *above* all we ask or think;" and secondly, that "If we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be *added* unto us." S. Matt. vi. 33; Ps. lxxxi. 11.—*J. Ford.*

V. 14.—I doubt not, but holy Zachary now felt the joy, that was the etymology of his son's name, and the truth of the Angel's promise (i. 14); not so much in that he had a son, as in that he was to be the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, the herald and the harbinger of the Most High: and hence he rejoiced, not so much in the particular privilege of his son, as in the general benefit, which the world might receive by his message; and therefore he blessed God for his duty, as well as his office (S. John iii. 40; 1 Cor. xiii. 5). This made the good man rejoice,

hoping, that, when men saw their danger, and were showed their Redeemer, they would fly into His arms for remission and grace: however, he praises God, who hath done His part. . . If Zachary is so rejoiced with the glimpses, we should much more with the Meridian Glory this Sun of Righteousness now shines in. Let us not only rejoice in His light "for a season" (S. John v. 35), but walk in it: if we be in darkness, it will show us our condition, and then guide us in the right way: this light will first convert us, and then conduct us. S. John viii. 12; Rom. xiii. 11, 12.—*Dean Comber.*

V. 15.—Great *in the sight of the Lord*—righteous *before God*, v. 6. Here is the measure of all excellency in man; not what we are in our estimate of ourselves, or, in the eye and opinion of the world, but what we are before God. To try ourselves by this test is the only safe preparation for the Judgment Day. xviii. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 3–5.—*J. Ford.*

V. 17.—Prophecy had been the oracle of Judaism and Christianity, to uphold the authority of the one, and reveal the promise of the other. And now (Mal. iv. 2) its latest admonitions were like those of a departing Minister, embracing and summing up his duties. Resigning its charge to the present precursor of Christ, it expired with the Gospel on its tongue.—*Davison.*

Turn the hearts of the fathers, &c. Let us beware of that proud Philosophy, which affects to inculcate philanthropy, while it denounces every home-born feeling, by which it is produced and nurtured. The paternal and

filial duties discipline the heart, and prepare it for the love of all mankind. The intensity of private attachments encourages, not prevents, universal benevolence. The nearer we approach the Sun, the more intense his heat; yet what corner of the system does he not cheer and vivify? ii. 51, 52; 1 Tim v. 4.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

Thus does our gracious Lord raise up instruments of His praise, and of good to the souls of men. O Blessed messenger of heaven, who wert sent to *turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God!* The blessed Angels themselves are but Ministers to this Ministry. They bring the message of peace and reconciliation; but man is made the instrument, to effect it. Heb. i. 14; 1 Tim. iv. 16.—*Austin.*

V. 19.—As the Angel of the Lord *stands in the presence of God* in the highest courts of Heaven, so he is represented, v. 11, as *standing* near the altar of incense, in the temple on earth, the place, where God's Honour dwelleth. The Church on earth faintly reflects the Beatific glory; we pass through the vestibule of external ordinances to the sight of God; and, when we die, as a good man said, "We change our place, but not our company." Ps. xcvi. 6; xxvi. 8; lxxxiv. 4–7.—*J. Ford.*

According to the proverb of the Jews, "Michael flies but with one wing, and *Gabriel* with two." God is quick in sending Angels of peace, and they fly apace; but the messengers of wrath come slowly: God is more hasty to glorify His servants, than to condemn the wicked. Dan. ix. 23; Rev. vii. 7.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 20.—*Dumb.* To show, that the forerunner of Christ, being now to be born, and by consequence Christ Himself soon to follow, the Levitical Priesthood was now to cease.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

In the hearing of mysteries, keep thy tongue quiet. Five words cost Zacharias forty weeks' silence. In such heights, convert thy questions into wonders; and let this suffice thee—The reason of the deed is the Power of the doer. Ex. xiv. 13.—*F. Quarles.*

It is observable what the Rabbins have delivered, that at the morning sacrifice the Priests, under the Law, did Bless the people with the solemn form of Benediction, but at the evening sacrifice they Blessed them not; to show, that in the evening of the world, the last days, which are the days of the Messias, the Benediction of the Law should cease, and the Blessing of Christ take place. When Zachariah the Priest, the father of John Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, *executed his office before God in the order of his course,* and the whole multitude of *the people waited for him,* to receive his Benediction, *he could not speak to them,* for he was dumb; showing the power of Benediction was now passing to another and far greater Priest, even to Jesus, whose doctrine in the Mount begins with "Blessed," and who, when He left His disciples, "lift up His hands, and Blessed them." 1 Chron. xxiii. 13.—*Bp. Pearson.*

V. 26.—Till now, human nature was less, than that of Angels; but by the Incarnation of the Word was to be exalted above the Cherubims; yet the Archangel Gabriel,

being despatched in embassy, to represent the joy and exaltation of his inferior, instantly trims his wings with love and obedience, and hastens with this narrative to the Holy Virgin; and, if we should reduce our prayers to action, and do God's Will on earth, as the Angels in heaven do it, we should promptly execute every part of the Divine Will, though it were to be instrumental to the exaltation of a brother above ourselves; knowing no end, but conformity to the Divine Will, and making simplicity of intention to be the fringes and exterior borders of our garments. xv. 7, 28; 1 Cor. xiii. 5.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

The pleasure of an ordinary mind arises from the satisfaction, it receives from without: the happiness of a great and noble soul from the satisfaction, it imparts. Acts xx. 35; 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15; vii. 13.—*P. Skelton.*

V. 27.—*To a Virgin.* Reformed Churches reject not all traditions, but such, as are spurious, superstitious, and not consonant to the prime Rule of faith, to wit, the Holy Scripture. Genuine traditions, agreeable to the Rule of faith, subservient to piety, consonant with Holy Scripture, derived from the Apostolick times by a successive current, and which have the uniform testimony of pious Antiquity, are received and honoured by us. Now such are these, which follow; the historical tradition, concerning the number, integrity, dignity, and perfection of the Books of Canonical Scriptures; the Catholick exposition of many sentences of holy Scripture; the holy Apostolick Creed; the Baptism of infants; *the perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary;* the religious observation of the Lord's Day, and some other festivals,

as Easter, Pentecost, &c.; Baptizing, and administering of the Holy Eucharist in public assemblies and congregations; the Service of the Church in a known language; the delivering of the Holy Communion to the people in both kinds; the superiority and authority of Bishops over Priests and Deacons, in jurisdiction, and power of Ordination. 1 Cor. xi. 2; 1 Thess. ii. 15.—*Bp. White.*

V. 28.—It is never safe, in matters of faith, to give the rein to our imaginations, or to quit for an instant the sure guidance of the Scriptures. On the warrant of those Scriptures we regard her, as the most Blessed of women, not simply because the Son of God was born of her; but because of the pre-eminent virtues, with which she was endued, her lowliness, and purity, her perfect faith, and her entire submission to the Will of God (Ver. 42, 45). But the Scriptures contain not the slightest intimation that she is to be regarded, as an object of Worship, more than any other of the Saints and servants of the Lord; nor is it possible to find in the writings of the Christian fathers for many centuries a trace of evidence, that she was so regarded. Nothing, in fact, is more remarkable than the silence of Scripture concerning her; as if God in His wisdom had resolved that we should know nothing about her more, than what was necessary to teach us the mystery of the Incarnation. Deut. xxxiv. 6.—*Dean Lowe.*

A candid and careful examination of the whole narrative will lead us to regard the mission and address of the Angel to Mary, rather as designed for the glory of the

Second Person of the ever Blessed Trinity, than for the glory of the Virgin. Thus, in the early Church, the title of "the mother of God," as applied to her, was by no means intended for *her* exaltation, but rather to vindicate the honour of our Lord from the error of those heretics, who supposed that the Godhead of Christ, was, as it were, lost in His Humanity: and, certainly, she was "the mother of God," so far as the two natures in Christ are inseparable; and, in regard to that communication of idioms, whereby the properties of either nature are attributed to one, and the same, Person of Christ (See S. John iii. 13; Acts xx. 28). It is interesting and instructive here to call to mind, how the Church, in her proper Services for "the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary," directs us to the doctrine of the Incarnation, as our chief theme of wonder and praise; the centre, around which our thoughts must revolve, and from whence they must pass on, through His Cross and Passion, to the Glory of His Resurrection. Isa. xlii. 8.—*J. Ford.*

V. 31.—That blessed *womb* of hers was the Bridal-chamber, wherein the Holy Ghost did knit that indissoluble knot betwixt our human nature, and His Deity; the Son of God assuming into the Unity of His Person that, which before He was not; and yet without change (for so must God still be) remaining that, which He was (Verse 35): which wonderful connection of two so infinitely differing natures, in the Unity of one Person, how it was then effected, is an inquisition, fitter for Angelical intelligence, than for our shallow capacity, to look after (See Ex. xxxvii. 9; and 1 S. Pet. i. 12). . .

Only this we may safely say, and must firmly hold, that, as the distinction of the Persons in the Holy Trinity hindereth not the Unity of the nature of the Godhead, although every Person entirely holdeth His incommunicable property; so neither doth the distinction of the two natures in our Mediator any way cross the Unity of His Person; although each nature remain entire in itself, and retaineth the properties agreeing thereunto, without any conversion, composition, commixion, or confusion.—*Abp. Usher.*

Whatever you write, it has no relish for me, unless I read there Jesus. Whatever you say in dispute, or conference, it has no relish for me, unless it speak of Jesus. . . The Name of Jesus is medicine to the soul. . . Nothing so checks the violence of anger, allays the swelling of pride, heals the wounds of envy, restrains the flow of wantonness, extinguishes the fire of lust, slakes the thirst of covetousness, and puts to flight the temptation to every impure affection. For, when I name Jesus, I represent to myself the Man, "meek and lowly," and of a loving heart; sober, chaste, pitiful; in a word, conspicuous for all purity and holiness, and at the same time Himself the Almighty God, who, while He heals us by His example, strengthens us by His aid. All this speaks to my heart, as soon as the name of Jesus sounds in my ear. Ps. xix. 10; Cant. iv. 11; v. 16.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 32.—S. Luke i. 32, 33; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 25, 26. It is observable that in these two passages the Christian Church is considered, as merely the continuation of the Jewish; as if the Gospel existed in its germ, even under the Law.—*J. H. Newman.*

V. 33.—*No end.* Cæsar is not Cæsar still, nor Alexander Alexander still; but Jesus is Jesus still, and shall be for ever. Heb. xiii. 8.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 34.—The question of Zacharias affected the thing itself, through a defect in his faith; Mary's question, inquiring *how*, asked in faith, presupposes the truth of the promise. S. John iii. 4; vi. 52.—*Bengel.*

V. 35.—O holy and ever-blessed Spirit, who didst *overshadow* the holy Virgin mother of our Lord, and cause her to conceive by a miraculous and mysterious manner, be pleased to overshadow my soul, and enlighten my spirit, that I may conceive the Holy Jesus in my heart, and may bear Him in my mind, and may grow up to "the fulness of the stature of Christ, to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus." Amen. Gal. iv. 19; Col. i. 27. —*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 36.—*Behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, &c.* Such was the usually gracious method of our Lord, to certify the truth of a promise by a sign, and to assure our weak faith in what is spiritual by means of something external, and subject to our senses (Gen. ix. 13; xvii. 11). Here then we may find a caution against undue exaltation of the character of the Virgin. Though we admire her Faith, especially, as contrasted with the hesitation of Zacharias, yet we see that God searches deeper than man; and that He thought fit to strengthen and increase that faith, as well as to prevent its failing, by the pregnancy of Elizabeth; a sign daily present, and which issued in the birth of John, according to God's promise. The words

of Elizabeth herself (verse 45), seem to have tended to the same result,—the supply of what was lacking in Mary's faith. Thus in the most eminent Saints, faith in its earlier stages, is found to be imperfect; yet it is our comfort to know, that the Lord looks to its reality, rather than to its degree. "Help my unbelief," and "Increase our faith," were both accepted prayers.—*J. Ford.*

V. 37.—I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an "Oh, the height!" (Rom. xi. 33). I can answer all the objections of Satan, and of my rebellious reason with that odd resolution, I learned of Tertullian, "It is certainly true, because it is impossible." I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest points; for to credit ordinary and visible objects is not faith, but persuasion. Isa. lv. 8.—*Sir T. Browne.*

V. 38.—The gracious heart is credulous; even when it sees not, it believes; and, when it sees but a little, it believes a great deal: neither doth it presume to prescribe unto God what, and how, He shall work; but takes what it finds, and unmoveably rests in what it takes.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 41.—"John did no miracle;" but he was the greatest of *Prophets.* The Holy Ghost divides His gifts, severally, unto men, as He will; and, if we lack some of His gifts, He abounds unto us in others. Only what we have, let us ascribe to Him, and diligently employ in His service. 1 Cor. xii.—*J. Ford.*

V. 43.—The humble penitent is not only startled at the greatness, but the unexpectedness, of the Divine

favour. The soul, that trembled before at God's judgments, now trembles at His mercy, stands astonished and confounded at itself, and at God; saying with the brethren of Joseph (Gen. xlii. 28), "What is this, that God hath done?" often repeating that of the pious Elizabeth, *Whence is this to me?* Can this Blessing be to me? Can it be real? May I presume to accept it, as designed for me? Am I awake, or is it not a dream? v. 8; 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19; Ps. cxxvi. 1.; Acts xii. 9.—*Wogan.*

V. 45.—The whole economy of our Salvation is nearly concerned in the *Incarnation.* To corrupt and deprave the doctrine is to defeat and frustrate, in a great measure, the Gospel of Christ, which bringeth salvation; wherefore it is of great moment, of everlasting concernment to us, not to be guilty of doing it ourselves, nor to take part with those, who do. . . We are forced to be thus particular and expressive in the wording of this Article, because of the many wiles, equivocations, and disguises of those, who endeavour to corrupt the faith. . . The sense and meaning of Holy Scripture on this Article was never questioned, till conceited men came to pervert the true doctrine of sacred Writ, by false glosses and comments of their own. 2 Cor. ii. 17.—*Dr. Waterland.*

V. 46.—*And Mary said.* The Blessed Virgin (whom God chose to be the instrument of the greatest blessing that ever the world had) by the fruit of her lips, as well as of her womb, hath given apparent testimony of the extraordinary Presence of the Divine Spirit with her, and in her. For this sacred Hymn breathes forth such lovely

mixtures of faith and fear, humility and love, charity and devotion, that it appears she was "full of grace," as well as "highly favoured." And it should be our wish and endeavour to repeat it with the same affections and holy fervours, with which she indited it. Perhaps we think, we have not the same occasion: it is true, God the Word took flesh in her womb, and that was her peculiar privilege; but, if we receive the Word of God and the motions of the Holy Spirit, that attend it, we may turn that Word into flesh by faith and obedience; if we so hear, as to practise, we do conceive Christ by faith; He is "formed in us" by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost in a pure heart, and He is by holiness brought forth; for Christ Himself calls such, as "Do His will," by the name of His "*mother*." S. Matt. xii. 50.—*Dr. Comber.*

She doubts not the word of the Angel, nor the assurance of Elizabeth; she prays not, that there *may be* a "performance of those things which were told her of the Lord;" but at once praises God, as if the thing was done. This is a very high degree of faith and of grace: indeed, as one observes, "Prayer, compared to praise, is as a fuliginous smoke issuing from a sense of sin, and human infirmity. Praises are the clear sparks of Piety, and sooner fly upwards." Ver. 68, 69; S. Mark xi. 24.—*J. Ford.*

If a laudable practice, by being extremely difficult, is a mark of a great soul, humility must not be denied that character; for this is a virtue more difficult to excellent than to ordinary souls. In other cases, a hero is to

contend with his vices, or his passions, or his open enemies; but, to be humble, he must overcome his virtues too, and that, when they act, unitedly, as one body; since, though other virtues naturally assist one another, they all conspire to ruin humility, which, having pride to contend with, is to deal with so subtle an adversary, that sometimes even by being foiled he overcomes. 1 Cor. xv. 10.—*R. Boyle.*

V. 49.—*He that is mighty* (Verse 51). It is observable here, from Mary's mention of the power of God, how the words of the Angel had impressed her heart, and fixed their place in her memory. "*The power of the Highest* shall overshadow thee!" "With God nothing shall be *impossible.*" We should learn here from her example to remember the words of God in our prayers and praises, to catch their Divine Spirit, to adopt their very tone and language. Her song of praise, dictated by the Holy Ghost, is now become the daily sacrifice of the Church; and for it, under God, "All generations shall call her Blessed." 1 Sam. ii. 1–10.—*J. Ford.*

V. 52.—The Divine eye looks upon high and low differently from that of man. They, who seem to stand upon Olympus, and high mounted to our eyes, may be but in the valleys and low ground unto His: for He looks upon those, as highest, who nearest approach His Divinity; and upon those, as lowest, who are farthest from it. 1 Sam. xvi. 7.—*Sir T. Browne.*

It was pride, that changed Angels into devils: it is humility, which makes men, as Angels. Isa. xiv. 12–15. —*S. Augustine.*

If you would build high and firm, dig low in humility, in meekness, and in forgiveness, for a foundation; and your roof shall reach the Heavens. vi. 48.—*P. Skelton.*

V. 57.—The Baptist's Nativity is the only one (that of Christ excepted), which the Church has thought proper to celebrate. . . Being designed by the remarkable incidents, which accompanied it, to turn the eyes of men towards One, who was far greater, One, "the latchet of whose shoes he confessed himself not worthy to unloose," the Church keeps a Day sacred to it, and directs us to begin our meditations by considering, as all Judæa did, when it happened, *What manner of child* that should be, which was so wonderfully born. Verse 66.—*Bp. Horne.*

V. 60.—It shall not be amiss to speak a word, or two, of the *naming* of your children. . . "In this thing," Chrysostom, a godly father, saith, "both the godliness of the parents, and also their great care for their children, is declared, and how they have forthwith, and from the beginning, taught the children, which were born unto them, giving them warning by the names, wherewith they call them, that they should practise virtue." . . Let them carry the names of the Apostles, of the Prophets, of the Martyrs, of such, who have been constant in the faith, and have suffered death for Christ's sake; that so they may be taught by their name to remember whose Name they bear, and that they neither speak, nor do anything, unworthy of their name. As, if any be called *John*, that he pray for grace, and desire to be "filled with grace;" that he give witness of Christ, that He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," that he

rebuke vice boldly, as John did in Herod, though he were a mighty Prince; or, if he be called *Paul*, &c., &c. Thus should our names teach us, that, whether we write them, or utter them, or hear them spoken, they may put us in mind of Christian duty and godliness. 2 Tim. ii. 19.—*Bp. Jewel.*

V. 63.—*John* signifies the Grace of God: but how will that gracious name rise up in judgment against that child, that is graceless.—*Burkit.*

V. 64.—*And praised God.* The noblest spirits are those, which turn to heaven, not in the hour of sorrow, but in that of joy: like the lark they wait for the clouds to disperse, that they may soar up into their native element. S. James v. 13.—*J. P. Richter.*

V. 67.—How great is the plenteousness of the Divine gift, if we bring a faith ready to receive it! Behold, on believing he regains that faculty of speech, which on his distrusting he had lost; and to it the spirit of Prophecy is added. Eph. iii. 20.—*Beda.*

V. 68.—When God Blesseth man, He bestows benefits upon him; man *blesseth* God, when he praises Him for His benefits. Heb. vii. 7.—*Bp. Patrick.*

The times of sorrow are the most seasonable times for Christ to present Himself to His Church. His coming—it is called a *Visitation;* and this supposes a state of sorrow and of distress; not a visitation of courtesy, but of comfort. He visits us, not as a friend only, but as a Physician to help and relieve us. He is called a *Con-*

solation (Verse 25), not only *joy*, but *consolation ;* that is, joy upon sorrow, the most welcome joy. "Consolation," writes S. Augustine, "belongs only to the unhappy. It is the exclusive property of weepers and of mourners." S. Matt. v. 4.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 69.—*A horn of Salvation* ("A mighty Salvation"). The mystery of the Incarnation discovers to man the greatness of his danger, by the greatness of those methods, which he stood in need of for his relief. Isa. lix. 16.—*Pascal.*

This sweet stream of Prophecy did, as the rivers, make its own banks fertile and pleasant, as it ran by, and flowed still forward to after ages ; and by the confluence of more such prophecies grew greater, as it went ; till it fell in with the main current of the Gospel in the New Testament, both acted and preached by the Great Prophet Himself, whom they foretold, as *to come*, and recorded by the Apostles and Evangelists, and thus united into one stream, clear as crystal. This doctrine of Salvation in the Scriptures hath still refreshed the city of God, His Church under the Gospel, and still shall do so, until it empty itself into the ocean of eternity. Ps. xlvi. 4.—*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 73.—Dr. Hammond, in his Practical Catechism (B. i. s. i.), shows how exactly these words of Zacharias correspond with the precise terms of God's oath to Abraham, as recorded, Gen. xxii. 17, 18. The expression here, "*Being delivered out of the hands of our enemies,*" answers to what is written there, "*Thy seed shall possess*

the gate of his enemies;" and refers to the primary Gospel blessing of Justification. Again, the expression here, that we might *serve Him in holiness, &c.*, is parallel with the promise there, "*I will bless thee;*" pointing to the other great Gospel privilege of Sanctification; for S. Peter (Acts iii. 26) connects this *blessing* with the "turning away every one of us from our iniquities," expressly recognized by S. Paul (Gal. iii. 14) as the "blessing of Abraham," by the gift of the Spirit. The parallel, as thus drawn by that great Doctor, is extremely ingenious; but not less sound and accurate. Isa. xxxiv. 16.—*J. Ford.*

V. 74.—Redemption is not an absolute setting free, but the buying out of an usurper's hands, that he may return to his proper Lord, changing him from the condition of a captive to a subject. S. Jude 5.—*Dr. Hammond.*

Fear and Love form, severally, the most concise, and the most perspicuous, distinction between the two Testaments.—*S. Augustine.*

Fear, under the Gospel, is not so banished, as no longer to assault our minds; but it is prevented from ever depressing them or hindering their energy. Conf. Verse 50.—*Calvin.*

V. 76.—The Athanasian Creed derives a large portion of its Scriptural proof, in regard to the Person of the Son of God, from this Chapter (Verses 16, 32, 35, 76). In connexion with this doctrine, we may observe that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are each, severally, by Himself, termed in this Chapter "*The*

Highest" (Verses 32, 76, 35). We rightly then hold and faithfully believe that "each Person in this Trinity is, by Himself, God and Lord," and that "the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal;" for "that, which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference, or inequality." "Praise the Lord."—*J. Ford.*

V. 78.—It was His arising in the world, that made the day break, and the shadows fly away. The types and shadows of the Law were then abolished. It was His light, that dispelled the mists of ignorance and idolatry; and He alone delivers the soul from the night of sin, and the misery, produced by it. All the stars, and the moon with them, cannot make it day in the world; this is the Sun's prerogative; nor can nature's highest light, the most refined science and morality, make it day in the soul: for this is Christ's. . . The sun can make dark things clear, but it cannot make a blind man see them; but herein is the excellency of this Sun, that He illuminates not only the object, but the faculty; doth not only reveal the mysteries of His Kingdom, but opens blind eyes to behold them. . . He, who at first "commanded light to shine out of darkness," infuseth saving knowledge and light into the dark soul of man. And this light kindles love. It is "the bearer of heat;" hath a powerful influence, begetting heat in the affections. . . It is "the light of His countenance," that banishes our false fears, that strengthens our faith, and cures our spiritual infirmities. This Sun is indeed the Sovereign Physician. "Unto you, that fear My

Name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing under His wings." Ps. xix. 1–6; xxxvi. 9; 2 Cor. iv. 6. —*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 79.—O Blessed hymn of joy and praise, divinely inspired by the Holy Ghost, and divinely pronounced by the venerable Priest, and daily sung in the Church of God! Oh, may the words be often in my mouth, and the sweetness of them always in my heart. The expressions, thou usest, are the comfort of my life; and the subject, thou treatest of, the hope of all the world. In whatever strain thou now praisest God, Oh, may we here use what Thou hast taught us, till we come to use, what Thou now doest.—*Austin.*

V. 80.—*In the deserts.* He, who desires to undertake the office of guiding others in the ways of wisdom and holiness, will best qualify himself for that purpose by first passing some time in a state of sequestration from the world; where anxious cares and delusive pleasures may not break in upon him, to dissipate his attention; where no sceptical nor sectarian spirit may blind his understanding, and nothing may obstruct the illumination from above; where every vicious inclination may be mortified through grace, by a prudent application of the proper means; and every fresh bud of virtue, sheltered from noxious blasts, may be gradually reared up into strength, beauty and fragrance; where, in a word, *he may grow and wax strong in spirit until the day of his showing unto Israel.* Ex. iii. 1; Ezek. i. 1–3; Dan. ix. 3, 23; Rev. 1. 9; Acts vii. 23.—*Bp. Horne.*

Till the day, &c. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where the immortal garland is to be ran for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly, we bring not innocence into the world; we bring impurity, much rather: that, which purifies us, is trial; and trial is by what is contrary.—*Milton.*

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1.—Now (in Holy Baptism) we begin to be reckoned in a new *Census*, or account. God is become our Father; Christ our elder brother; the Spirit the earnest of our inheritance; the Church, our mother; our food is the Body and Blood of our Lord; faith is our learning; religion our employment; and our whole life is spiritual, and Heaven the object of our hope, and the mighty prize of our high calling. Phil. iii. 20.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 4.—Out of Bethlehem never came any one, that we have heard of, except Jesus Christ, to whom the words of the prophet (Micah v. 2) could belong in any sense; nor any persons of eminence at all. Bethlehem has for nearly 1700 years been destroyed: it would be difficult, I suppose, to point out the place, where it stood: it concerns the Jews therefore to show, if this prophecy did not receive its completion in Christ, how it was fulfilled, or is even possible to be fulfilled at all. If you come to compute the power of chance, which some call in on every occasion, consider what the chance was, when one small town in a kingdom was pitched upon for the birth of an extraordinary person, that any extraordinary person at all should be born in it; much less one whose character and pretensions, especially, corresponded with so singular a description,—"whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Nothing more remains of this

prophecy, than to observe by what curious and seemingly accidental means Divine Providence was about to fulfil its purpose. S. Matt. ii. 5, 6.—*Paley.*

V. 7.—Thus even the parents of the King of heaven submit to the public government, and obediently undertake a long and difficult journey, to fulfil the commands of Cæsar. So perfectly already have they learned their Son's instructions, to give all their due. Rejected in the inn, they quietly retire to the mean lodging of a stable; deprived of even ordinary accommodations, they patiently repose their adorable child in a manger; and readily do they practise, beforehand, the great lesson, He came to teach, of "being meek and lowly," as He was. Rom. xiii. 1–8.—*Austin.*

A common *inn*, where every one might come, the Gentile, as well as the Jew; and because, perhaps, they would not be together in one chamber (for the Jews, we read, meddle not with the Samaritans, nor keep their company), therefore Christ would be born in the stable, where there is no distinction made, but all are put together. Rom. x. 12, 13.—*Bp. Cosin.*

V. 8.—*Shepherds*, watching their flocks by night, are honoured with the first notice of the Messiah's birth, and made the first harbingers of it to others. As this is an example, so it should be an encouragement to all, who have the pastoral care of souls, to be diligently vigilant over their flocks, to guide and teach them by day, and to watch and pray for them *by night*. Such faithful shepherds may expect every blessing of heaven upon their

labours; its light to illuminate and dispell all darkness of error and ignorance; *the Glory of the Lord to shine round about them,* and brighten their example: the society of *Angels* to attend them; a happy success in the *glad tidings,* they bring, of peace and Salvation; and, finally, as the crown of all, the Beatifick vision of the Holy Jesus. S. John xxi. 15–17.—*Wogan.*

V. 9.—The Angels themselves (to whom, one might think, the joy of men should seem but small) call it *a great joy.* It is the joy of a treasure, infinitely more worth, than all, which a man hath besides (S. Matt. xiii. 44), a joy of a triumphal harvest (Isa. ix. 3, 4), and of victorious spoils, wherein there is, not only an escape from dangerous hazard, but a large reward of plenty and peace. It is "a full joy;" there is no sorrow mingled with it: nay, it is "all joy;" and therefore there is nothing, but sorrow, without it. S. John xv. 11; Rom. xv. 13.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 10.—*All people.* Judæa must not engross this Angelical Gospel; it is of importance most universal and unlimited, reaching through all successions of time, and all extensions of place, filling all ages and all regions of the world with matter and with obligation of joy. . . The Power of God did brightly shine in the Creation; the Wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the government of things; but the Incarnation of God is that work, that dispensation of grace, wherein the Divine Goodness doth most conspicuously display itself. . . Having so many so great causes of joy, are we not very stupid, are we not strangely cross and perverse, if we

neglect so pleasant a duty of our special rejoicing? Deut. xxxii. 43; Ps. xcvii. 1; Isa. liv. 1.—*Dr. Barrow.*

V. 11.—That by the title of *Lord*, here given to Christ by the Angel, is to be understood the ineffable and incommunicable name Jehovah, or Lord, in its most exalted and transcendental sense, appears . . by the context in the Gospel, and the form of the Angel's speech to the shepherds, when the term "*Lord*," being thrice repeated, without any note of distinction or difference, must necessarily refer to, and signify, the same Divine Being (Verse 9, "The Angel of *the* Lord'—"The glory of *the* Lord"). And what reason can be assigned, why Christ, whom the same Angel here calls *The* Lord is not to be understood of the same Jehovah, whose glory shone around them, and whose this Angel was? . . The Angel calls Him, not Christ, *your* Lord, as if the title related only to men, but Christ *the* Lord, in an absolute and supreme sense, as Lord of the whole creation, even the Lord of Hosts, that most known and peculiar title of the Most High God. Having, then, the confession of these heavenly Spirits, that Christ is both "their Lord and ours," and consequently their God, as well as ours, we may well conclude with S. Peter, that "He is Lord of all;" and with S. Paul, that "He is over all, God Blessed for evermore;" and every true Christian may say to Him with S. Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Acts x. 36; Rom. ix. 5; S. John xx. 28.—*Wogan.*

V. 13.—No sooner did one Angel of the Lord announce the manifestation of God in the flesh, than the whole

multitude of the heavenly host immediately are on the wing, breaking forth into the harmonious praises of their Creator; that by their example they might teach us as often as any one of our brethren should proclaim aloud the lessons of Divine Wisdom, or, as often as we ourselves should ponder on any Sacred truths, we have heard or read, that we should at once give praise to the Lord by word of mouth, and in our hearts and lives. Ps. cvi. 46; 1 Cor. xiv. 16.—*Beda.*

How sweetly does this music sound in this dead season? (ver. 8). In the day time it would not, it could not, so much affect the ears. All harmonious sounds are advanced by a silent darkness. Thus it is with the glad tidings of Salvation. The Gospel never sounds so sweet, as in the night of persecution, or of our own private affliction; it is ever the same; the difference is in our disposition to receive it. O God, whose praise it is to "give songs in the night," make my prosperity conscionable, and my crosses cheerful! i. 79; Isa. xxx. 29; Acts xvi. 25.—*Bp. Hall.*

Praising God. The worship of the Church Triumphant is wholly made up of hymns, without any mixture, and alloy, of supplications. For why? Their wants and wickedness, which are the subjects of them, are ceased; all the evils, which fill the Litanies of the Church Militant, are passed away. And they, that are redeemed from them, have nothing to do in Heaven, but to sing praises to their Redeemer; which they do before the throne, as we read, "resting not day nor night." So that we may measure the excellency of Praise above prayers and sup-

plications with the same argument, as S. Paul doth the excellency of Charity above faith and hope, not only from its properties, but from its duration, because "it never faileth." Praise ceaseth not with the state of mortality, like the other; but will accompany the Saints into Heaven, even as Charity will; Praise being, if we may so speak, the religion of the Saints above, as Charity their work and employment; who shall have, and who can be conceived to have, nothing to exercise either their devotion or communion, but the praises of God, and the love of one another. Isa. xliii. 21; 1 Cor. xiii. 8.—*Dr. Bisse.*

V. 14.—Among all the diversities of religion, which the world holds, I think it may stand with most safety to take that, which makes most for God's glory, and man's quiet. I confess, in all the treatises of Religion, that I ever saw, I find none, that I should so soon follow, as that of the Church of England. I never found so sure a direction for Religion, as the Song of the Angels at the Birth of Christ—"*Glory be to God on high:" there* is the honour, the reverend obedience, and the admiration, and the adoration, which we ought to give Him—"*On earth peace;*" this is the effect of the former, working in the hearts of men, whereby the world appears in his noblest beauty, being an entire chain of inter-mutual amity —"*Good will towards man;*" this is God's mercy, to reconcile man to Himself, after his fearful desertion of his Maker. Search all religions the world through, and you will find none, that ascribes so much to God, nor that constitutes so firm a love among men, as does the established doctrine of the Protestant Church among us.

All other, either detract from God, or infringe the peace of men.—*Owen Feltham.*

V. 15.—*Let us now go, &c.* They did not reason nor debate within themselves, who should keep the wolf from the sheep in the meantime; but they did, as they were commanded, and committed their sheep unto Him, whose pleasures they obeyed. So let us do now, when we be called, and commit all other things unto Him, that calleth us. S. Matt. vi. 33.—*Bishop Hooper.*

V. 16.—Now, like, as He was born in rags, so the converting of the whole world is by rags; by things, which are most vile in this world. What is so common, as water? Yet we wash our remission of our sins by Baptism: for, like, as He was found in rags, so we must find Him by Baptism: *there* we begin. So, likewise, go to the Lord's Supper, where the bread is consecrated, when the words are spoken over it . . . *then* we are assured that we feed upon Christ spiritually. . . And so it appeareth, that we may not seek Christ in the glistening of this world; for what is so common, as water? What is so common, as bread and wine? Yet He promiseth to be found there, when He is sought with a faithful heart. So, will you have Christ—Where shall you find Him? Not in the jollities of this world, but in rags in the poor people. Have you any poor people among you in the town or city? Seek Him then among the rags; there shall you find Him.—*Bp. Latimer.*

V. 18.—While the conduct of the shepherds is so minutely recorded, that we may "glorify God in them,"

and learn to imitate their faith and zeal, their humble, contented, and cheerful piety, all we read of the people of Bethlehem, to whom they first conveyed these glad tidings of great joy, is, that they *wondered.* They were surprised at the strangeness of what they heard; but they made no inquiries, to ascertain the fact for themselves; they followed not the example of the shepherds, who sought *with haste,* and therefore found. So, when the people of Nazareth heard the same Gospel, not from the lips of man, but through the Ministry of the Lord Himself, they *wondered* (iv. 22); and then took offence, and sought to destroy Him. Thus, neither in the place of His conception, nor in that of His birth, did our Blessed Lord find any home, or welcome, in the hearts of men. They, who by the height of their privileges were *exalted to Heaven,* were, through their stupid indifference, or wilful rejection of God's exceeding Grace, *cast down into hell.* How awful, when viewed in this light, is the warning of the Apostle, "Beware lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and *wonder,* and perish: for I work a work, in your days, a work, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Acts viii. 13; xiii. 40, 41; xvii. 19, 20.—*J. Ford.*

V. 19.—She *kept* them, because she *pondered* them. ix. 44.—*Dr. Manton.*

Meditation is that exercise of the mind, by which it recalls a known truth, as some kind of creatures do their food, to be ruminated upon, till all the vicious parts be extracted. Ezek. iii. 1, 2.—*Bp. Horne.*

They, that have learned of the Lord Jesus to be lowly and humble in heart, profit more by meditation and prayer, than by reading and hearing. Ps. iv. 4; Col. iii. 16.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 20.—*Glorifying and praising God* (Verse 13). The shepherds now are become like Angels; they do service to God, in *praising Him;* and then they do service to man, in publishing the Gospel. Mark the transforming effects of Divine grace, of an insight by faith into heaven, of having the "Glory of the Lord," manifested in the face of Jesus Christ, "shining round about us" in the Word and Sacraments. We seem to antedate on earth that promised time, when we shall be "equal unto the Angels (xx. 36); so that even now "our conversation is in heaven." Blessed shepherds, what a lesson have ye thus taught us! xxiv. 53; Heb. xi. 1.—*J. Ford.*

V. 21.—Our Lord took our nature and condition. He was "made under the Law," moral and ceremonial. The directive part of the moral law He fulfilled by the innocency of His life; the penalty He satisfied, as our surety, being under an obligation to save us. And He appeared as a sinner, in His subjection to the Law of Moses. That "handwriting was against us" (Col. ii. 14). He therefore entered into the bond, that we had forfeited. In His Circumcision He signed it with those drops of blood, which were an earnest of His shedding the rest on the Cross. For whosoever was circumcised "became a debtor to the whole Law." And we may observe, it is said, that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," so the Law, of which Moses was a type and

minister, lifted up the Messiah on the cross. Heb. vii. 22; Gal. iv. 4, 5.—*Dr. Bates.*

This sweet Name contains in it a thousand treasures of good things, in delight whereof S. Paul useth it five hundred times in his Epistles, as Genebrardus observeth. Ref. S. Mark xvi. 20; Eph. i.—*Dean Boys.*

V. 24.—As at Verse 4, Joseph and Mary give us an example of obedience to Civil Governors, so here we have recorded their like dutiful observance of Ecclesiastical customs and constitutions. xx. 24.—*J. Ford.*

At that hallowed hour, when the Eucharist is consecrated, Christ is again, figuratively and Sacramentally, *presented* in the Temple on earth. For His sake, the Father is then well pleased with us: He hears our prayers, forgives our sins, heals our infirmities, and graciously accepts our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Think not, O man, who slightest and disparagest that Holy Ordinance, that thou shouldst have received any pleasure, hadst thou stood by the Blessed Virgin, when she presented her Son Jesus at Jerusalem.—*Bp. Horne.*

V. 25.—The Birth of our Lord was attested to, not only by Angels, and prophets, and shepherds, but by the aged and the righteous among men (Verse 36). Every age, and each sex, and the accomplishment of miracles, help to establish our faith. A virgin is a mother; a barren woman is with child; a dumb man speaks; Elizabeth prophesies; a magician adores; one, shut up in the womb, leaps for joy; a widow makes confession (Verse 38); a righteous man *waits for the consolation of Israel.* Verse 10.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 26.—Lord, be pleased to shake my clay cottage, before Thou throwest it down. Make it totter awhile, before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned, before I am surprised. Deliver me from "sudden death;" not from sudden death, in respect of itself; for I care not how short my passage be, so it be safe. Never any weary traveller complained, that he came too soon to his journey's end. But let it not be sudden, in respect of me. Make me always ready to receive death. Thus no guest comes unawares to him, who keeps a constant table. Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2; 2 Cor. v. 1.—*Th. Fuller.*

V. 29.—*It was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost.* Taking this in connection with, "*according to Thy Word,*" it would appear that Simeon's prayer was offered to the Third Person in the ever Blessed Trinity. For each Divine Person is worshipped *junctim*, or *divisim.*—*J. Ford.*

The swan-like song of old Simeon. He speaks, like a merchant, who had got all his goods on ship-board, and now desires the master of the ship to hoist sail, and be gone homewards. Indeed, what should a Christian, who is but a foreigner here, desire to stay any longer for in the world, but to get this full lading in for heaven? Gen. xlix. 18; 2 Tim. iv. 6.—*Gurnall.*

V. 30.—*Thy Salvation.* The work of our Redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear. His Incarnation was the great step towards it; whence saith S. Athanasius, "The very assumption of flesh was the Redemption of all mankind. S. John i. 14.—*Dr. Barrow.*

V. 32.—Should I not be censured for curiosity, I would observe one thing in the order of the titles; why the *light of the Gentiles* should be placed before *the glory of the Jews.* It is not my conceit, but noted by the learned, that the sweet singer of this song doth put the Gentiles before the Jews; because the second calling, the conversion of the Jews to Christ, shall not be, until the fulness of the Gentiles come: S. Paul avoucheth it (Rom. xi. 25), that their obstinacy shall continue till then; and then "all Israel shall be saved." But he termeth this a mystery: and therefore I shall not meddle with it.—*Dr. Richard Clerke.*

V. 35.—"Lest they should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the Revelations," both the Blessed Virgin and Zacharias had *a thorn in the flesh* given to them, severally, by the grace of God. This piercing *sword* was appointed unto Mary. Loss of speech was to Zacharias, as a punishment, so also a preservative. Those, who are humble, the Lord exalts; and again, whom He exalts He also humbles, lest through pride they lose what, through grace, they have attained.—*J. Ford.*

The nature of Christianity stands in opposition to all other professions in the world, confutes the philosopher, silenceth the scribe, strikes oracles dumb, cries to every man in the world to go out of it. It doth in a manner bid defiance to the whole world. It tells the Jew his ceremonies are beggarly; the wise man of the world, that his philosophy is but deceit, and his wisdom madness. It plucks the wanton from the harlot's lips, tumbles down the ambitious from his pinnacle, disarms the avenger, strips the rich. Acts xxviii. 22; Rom. xii. 2.—*Farindon.*

V. 37.—Happy the man, whose goodness is always progressive, and whose virtues increase with his years, who loseth not, in multiplicity of worldly cares and pleasures, the holy fervours of his "first love," but goeth on burning and shining more and more, to the end of his days. The Church, like her representative Sarah, is now "well stricken in years;" but we hope that, like her, she will "still bring forth more fruit in her old age;" we look for many more "children of promise" to be born unto Christ, both from among the Jews and Gentiles. Ps. i. 3, 4.—*Bp. Horne.*

Departed not from the Temple. You waste the whole day in the concerns of the body; and you cannot spare two short hours for the care of your soul. You frequent the theatre, and never leave it, till the close, when it is said, *Valete et plaudite;* and yet you depart from the Church, before the celebration of the Divine mysteries. S. Mark xiv. 37.—*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 38.—How many *thanks* and praises do we owe unto Him for this our Salvation, wrought by His dear and only Son Christ, who became a pilgrim on earth, to make us citizens in heaven; who became the Son of man, to make us the sons of God; who became obedient unto the Law, to deliver us from the curse of the Law; who became poor, to make us rich; vile, to make us precious; subject to death, to make us live for ever! What greater love could we silly creatures desire, or wish to have, at God's hands? . . Therefore, let us confess Him with our mouths, praise Him with our tongues, believe on

Him with our hearts, and glorify Him with our good works. Verses 13, 20, 28.—*Homilies.*

V. 40.—*And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit.* The very same expressions are here applied to the Lord, which were before used to describe the natural growth of the Baptist, in mind and body. By this we are confirmed in the faith of His substantial and perfect Humanity. 1 S. John iv. 2.—*J. Ford.*

V. 42.—Our Saviour was then too young to attend the feast; but it is likely that, being poor, they had nobody, with whom they could safely leave Him; and it is still more likely, that the Son of God, young as He was, already placed His chief joy in Mount Zion; that He was already glad, like His forefather David, when they said, "Let us go into the House of the Lord," and was anxious already to be engaged in His heavenly "Father's business."—*Bp. Heber.*

V. 45.—*They found Him.* "In Thy Presence," saith David, "is the fulness of joy," and this joy shall arise chiefly from the vision of God, and partly from the sight of all the holy Angels, and blessed souls of just and perfect men, who are in bliss and glory with Him; but, especially, from the blissful sight of "Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament," our Emmanuel, God made man. His sight will be the chief cause of our bliss and joy. If the Israelites in Jerusalem so "shouted for joy, that the earth rang" again, to see Solomon crowned, how shall the elect rejoice in Heaven to see Christ, the true Solomon, adorned with glory? If John Baptist, at His presence

did leap in His mother's womb for joy, how shall we exult for joy, when He will be, not only *with* us, but *in* us, in heaven! If the wise men rejoiced so greatly to find Him a babe, lying in a manger, how great shall the joy of the elect be, to see Him sit, as King, in His celestial throne! If Simeon was glad to see Him, an infant in the temple, presented by the hands of the priest, how great shall our joy be, to see Him a King, ruling all things at the right hand of His Father! If Joseph and Mary were so joyful to find Him, in the midst of the doctors of the temple, how glad shall our souls be, to see Him sitting, as Lord, among Angels in heaven! This is that joy of our Master, which, as the Apostle saith, "the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man can conceive," which, because it cannot enter into *us*, we must "enter into *it*." 1 Kings i. 40; Heb. xii. 24; S. Matt. xxv. 21.—*Bp. Baily.*

V. 46.—He *heard* them with diligent attention, while they expounded the Scripture, and, when the point was not fully illustrated, *asking them questions* for His further information. . . "Christ *disputing* with the doctors" is a very common expression. But this is certainly a misrepresentation of the fact; for we have not a word said by the Evangelists, concerning any such thing, as disputation; neither are we told that Jesus was in the professor's chair, but in the place of a learner's, or *in the midst* of the Jewish doctors (see Acts xxii. 3). . . It is also an injury to our Lord's character. He was, in His tender, as well as riper, years, a pattern for mankind. He practised, at each period of life, what was becoming

and amiable in that particular state. Now, as modesty and a teachable temper are essential to the decorum of a youthful conduct, these we may be assured were the distinguishing characteristics of "the Holy Child," Jesus. Gen. xxii. 7; Job xxxii. 4–7.—*W. Hervey.*

V. 47.—As possessing a human soul, which needed instruction, He *heard them and asked them questions.* He astonished them with His *answers,* as God.—*J. Ford.*

They, who mean to be Doctors, and teach others, must, in their first accesses and degrees of discipline, learn of those, whom God and public order hath set over us in the mysteries of religion.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 48.—*My Father's business.* His first confession, that He was "The Son of God." S. Mark xv. 39.—*J. Ford.*

Every one should be ready to give up his own will, and to part, if necessary, with the favourite object of his heart. For, though our Lord Jesus had said that it was proper for Him to attend to the business of His Heavenly Father, yet He followed the wishes of His blessed mother, accompanying her and her holy spouse to Nazareth, where He remained and *was subject unto them.* S. John iv. 34; Rom. xv. 3.—*Bonaventura.*

We see in this Chapter, how the fifth Commandment, which is "the first with promise," received its most perfect accomplishment in Him, who "fulfilled the Law for us," and thereby qualified Himself to be a true Sacrifice for our sins, having no sins of His own to suffer

for. For the Lord *honoured* His *mother*, and His reputed *father*. He obeyed the decree of Cæsar Augustus (Ver. 1): He submitted Himself to the Doctors in the Temple, *both hearing them and asking them questions.*" Ver. 46. *J. Ford.*

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1.—Whether the attentive reader examine the revelation, which the Patriarch Jacob gave, upon his dying bed, concerning the supremacy of the tribe of Judah, and the period, when "the sceptre should depart from him;" or carry on his thoughts to the still more minute prediction, which the Angel delivered unto Daniel, concerning the time that should elapse "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince;" he will perceive, that the text supplies him, not with one, but with many tests, whereby those prophecies may be tried, and their truth made manifest; and that a comparison of it with the pages of Roman, or of Jewish, annals, will alike concur in proving the harmony of the Divine Word with historic facts. He will see the beams of the heavenly promise, which radiate from every quarter, that has been blest with a revelation of God's Will, and traverse each field of vision with marked and distinct lustre, now meeting in a common centre, and pouring their full concentrated light upon the path of the son of Zacharias. Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 25.—*J. S. M. Anderson.*

If wars be a sign of the time of His second coming, peace was a sign of the first. S. Mark xiii. 7.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 5.—*Every valley, &c.* According to the logical extent, or universality, this prophecy neither hath been,

nor can be, fulfilled in its plain, literal, and historical sense. . . The exact accomplishment is not to be expected, till the last Day. Howbeit, there was a true *crisis* of it, exhibited at the Baptism of John. . . From that time the publicans and sinners were advanced, and the children of Abraham, which gloried in their birthright, debased. Poor fishermen became heads of the tribes of Israel, greater men in the House of God, than Moses and Aaron had been; whilst Moses' successors, the Chief Priests and Doctors of the Law, were infatuated, and became like salt without taste or savour. . . The Baptist continueth his former allegory, or parabolical speech, according to the Prophet Isaiah's intent and meaning. *Now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* None are excepted; no, not the offspring of Abraham: for, unless upon the Baptism of water, which John administered, they become fruitful, like the vine and olive, they must be accounted amongst the thorns and brambles, and be sentenced unto the fire. Isa. xxxv. xl. lv. 12, 13.—*Dr. Jackson.*

This state of nothingness and self-emptiness is as much a preparation for the New, as the void and inform space was to the Old Creation: it is the true and proper first matter in the spiritual world, unto which the form of the New Creation will be introduced; and if man does but contain himself in this nothing, God will not fail to work all, and to be all, in him, having promised His special Presence to "the man of an humble spirit."—*Norris.*

V. 8.—The Empyrean heaven saved not the Angels, who in that heaven committed sin. The terrestrial Paradise saved not Adam, who in that Paradise committed sin. And dost thou presume to hope in the Church for impunity of those evils, which in the Church you perpetrate? Jer. vii. 4.—*Segneri.*

Think not the privilege of the soil, wherein thou art set, that it shall excuse thee. Thou art planted in a choice place, in the garden of God: no; that shall not exempt thee. Thou art a member of the visible Church; that shall be no protection: nay; that will add to thy condemnation. A man will endure an unfruitful tree anywhere, rather than in his garden or orchard: in the fields, or hedges, men suffer them to grow; but they cut them down, cast them out of their gardens. God is not so much displeased with the unfruitfulness of heathens and Pagans; they are trees of the forest. Christ shows, where they grow (xiv. 13), in the highways or hedges. But a Christian grows in God's garden; *that* must be fruitful. "Every branch, that bears not fruit in Me He taketh away," saith Christ, S. John xv. 2. Lean kine in a fat pasture is an ill sign. Isa. v. 1–7; Amos iii. 2; Acts xvii. 30.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

Able of these stones. What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul. The philosopher, the saint, and the hero, the wise, the good and the great man, very often lie hid in the plebeian; which a proper education might have disinterred, and brought to light. Jer. xviii. 6.—*Addison.*

V. 9.—*Now is laid.* Before, it was called wrath *to come;* lest, therefore, they should put it far from them, as the wicked in Amos, and the bad servant in the Gospel, and grow atheistical scoffers, as some do in Esay and others, he is instant with them, and proposeth this judgment, as imminent. 2 S. Pet. ii. 3.—*Bp. Lake.*

As the officers carried before the Roman Magistrates, a bundle of rods and a sharp axe, so we see John Baptist, this usher and officer of Christ; he comes before Christ, not only with rods and chastisements, but with an axe of destruction to hew down, and stub up, unfruitful and unprofitable Christians. Mal. iii. 1; iv. 6.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

The surgeon seems enraged at the wound, in order that he may cure his patient; because, if the wound be spared, and fondled, the patient dies. Tit. i. 13; S. Jude 23.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 10.—Our desire, and love, and hope, are not so apt to be wrought upon by the promises of rewards and happiness; as our fear is from the apprehension of the Divine displeasure. For, though we have lost, in a great measure, the gust and relish of true happiness, yet we still retain a quick sense of pain and misery. Prov. i. 7. —*Abp. Tillotson.*

What shall we do? Here is intimated an engaging themselves, by a solemn promise and undertaking, to the practice of that repentance, unto which John baptized them. Whence arose the grave Form of the ancient Churches, wherein questions were proposed to the person Baptized, touching his faith and repentance, renouncing

the world, the flesh, and the devil, with a solemn answer and stipulation, obliging thereunto.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 11.—When therefore he came down among the cities of men, as the great preacher of repentance, and found himself surrounded with multitudes of all kinds, given up to sins and vices, of which he knew nothing, we might have expected that he would have said something of the desert, and his own more excellent mode of life; that he would have called upon all men to retire from so wicked a world and to live, like himself, quite disengaged from all temporal things. But the holy Baptist's teaching was far different from this; he was as gentle and considerate to others, as he was severe and unsparing to himself. They confessed their sins unto him, and he entered into all their temptations; and, instead of requiring of them great and difficult things, he told them to avoid their besetting sins and temptations, and so amend their lives; that, first leaving off to do evil, they might learn to do well; and then, no doubt, he hoped that they would be led on by the Spirit of God to higher and better things. Isa. i. 16–20.—*Plain Sermons.*

V. 15.—*In expectation.* The benefit and privilege of the Israelites consisted in this; "chiefly, because unto them were committed the Oracles of God;" so that the hopes of the ancient believer may be said to have been always in a state of pilgrimage, travelling onwards through successive periods of Revelation, and finding no rest, till they had crossed the barrier flood, which divided the Law and the Gospel, the first Dispensation and the second. The lapse of time, which had passed, 430 years,

before their own peculiar, the enjoyment of Canaan, was made good, might teach them, that none of the Divine promises are lost, because they are delayed. ii. 25, 38. —*Davison.*

Learn, O my soul, to confess a truth, though never so much to thine own diminution. Learn to advance the honour of God, though to thy own disparagement. . . . Learn to decline the applause of men, and banish from thy thoughts all conceits of thine own worth. Learn to speak lowly of thyself, and to mean, as thou sayest: and seek not thy praise from men, but God.—*Austin.*

V. 17.—It is idle to dispute whether the *fire,* denounced against the unrelenting, be metaphorical or real. Suppose it a metaphor; yet those metaphors, which represent things of another world, do not generally exceed the originals, or the reality, of the things, designed to be shadowed out by them. Verse 9.—*J. Seed.*

I do not mean to affirm generally, that reason is not a judge in matters of religion; but I do maintain, that there are certain points, concerning the nature of the Deity, and the schemes of Providence, upon which reason is dumb, and Revelation is explicit; and that, in these points, there is no certain guide, but the plain obvious meaning of the written Word. The question, concerning the eternal duration of the torments of the wicked, is one of these. Rom. xi. 33–36; 1 Cor. ii. 14.—*Bp. Horsley.*

V. 18.—The Holy Spirit comes into the heart, first, as a *harbinger;* secondly, as a private secret guest; thirdly, as an inhabitant, or house-keeper. Every check of

conscience, every sigh for sin, every fear of judgment, every desire of grace, every motion and inclination towards spiritual good, be it never so shortwinded, is a fore-runner of the Spirit; a kind of John Baptist to Christ; something that God hath sent before to "prepare the way of the Lord."—*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 20.—It is a great deal easier to commit a second sin, than it was to commit the first; and a great deal harder to repent of a second, than it was to repent of the first.—*Dr. Whichcote.*

Above all. The persecution of God's people, when we know them to be such, is the greatest of all sins. The Apostle, therefore, calls it "An evident token of perdition." Phil. i. 28; S. James v. 6.—*J. Ford.*

If Christ will cast those men into hell, that did not visit His people, when they were in prison, into what a hell will Christ cast those men, that cast His people into *prison?* . . If want of mercy will condemn men at the Day of judgment, what will acts of cruelty and unmercifulness do? S. Matt. xxv. 42.—*Chr. Love.*

V. 21.—Before you begin your psalm of praise and rejoicing in God, make this use of your imagination. Be still, and imagine, that you saw *the heavens open*, and the glorious choirs of the Cherubim and Seraphim about the throne of God. Think upon this, till your imagination has carried you above the clouds, till it has placed you amongst those heavenly beings, and made you long to bear a part in their eternal music. ii. 9; Rev. vii.—*Wm. Law.*

V. 22.—It is probable that the appearance of fire, or of a bright cloud, which had taken in former times the shape of a pillar, guiding the Israelites, and which afterwards took that of fiery tongues, lighting on the Apostles, now hovered over the Blessed Jesus, in somewhat of the form of *a dove*, with wings spreading over Him; and we may be certain that it came down with a gentle steady motion of a dove. Isa. iv. 5; Ex. xiii. 21, 22.—*Plain Sermons.*

The dove might have stretched its wings over Him, like the Cherub over the Mercy-seat. Ex. xxv. 20.—*J. Ford.*

If, in the administration of Baptism, any one of the Three Persons in the Trinity be omitted, it is clear that no blessing is conferred in the water of Regeneration. The whole Trinity must be invoked. For the Lord, when He was Baptized by John, received Baptism under the sacred emblems of the Trinity; the Lord saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" The Father is manifested in the voice; the Son, in the human form; the Holy Spirit, in the dove. S. Matt. xxviii. 19. —*Isidore of Seville.*

I suppose, that in the Baptism of Christ, the mystery of all our Baptisms was visibly acted; and that God says to every one, truly Baptized, as He said to Him (in a proportionable sense), "*Thou art my Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"—*Mede.*

V. 23.—It may be said, "Why was it, that after *thirty years*, Jesus came to His Baptism?" After this Baptism, He was thenceforth to set aside the Law: wherefore,

even until this age, which admits of all sins, He continues fulfilling it all; that no one might say, that, because He Himself could not fulfil, therefore He set it aside. For, neither do all passions assail us at all times; but, while in the first age of life, there is much thoughtlessness and timidity; in that, which comes after it, pleasure is more vehement; and, after this, again, the desire of wealth. For this cause, He awaits the fulness of His adult age, and throughout it all fulfils the Law; and so comes to His Baptism, adding it, as something, which follows upon the complete observance of all the other Commandments. Heb. iv. 15.—*S. Chrysostom.*

The Venerable Bede gives the supposed mystical sense of the *thirty years* in a manner, which, though fanciful and overstrained, yet deserves attention, in consequence of the important truth, contained in it. Having very properly observed that our Lord's delaying His Baptism, and entrance on His Ministry, serves, as a caution, to those, who prematurely aspire to Holy Orders, he says, that this period of life was befitting for our sakes, "on account of the mystery of the Trinity, and the observance of the Decalogue." "Let him therefore," he adds, "who is being Baptized, or, who exults in the thought of having been already Baptized, be a man of *thirty years,* in this sense; so as to receive, and also to fulfil, the *Ten* Commandments, in the Faith of the *Trinity.*" This view offers an interesting illustration of S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. —*J. Ford.*

S. Luke shares with S. Matthew in the honour of having been chosen to record our Lord's genealogy, our

Lord's Sermon on the Mount (in substance, at least), and our Lord's Prayer; matters of the highest importance, bearing, severally, upon the things, to be believed, to be done, to be prayed for. But the star of S. Luke excels that other star in glory, so far as to him belong, exclusively, the Christian Hymns, the *Magnificat, Benedictus,* and *Nunc dimittis.* And, if the Sacrificial calf be the distinguishing emblem of S. Luke among the Evangelists, most appropriate to this symbol are the parables of the lost piece of silver and of the prodigal son, recorded in this Gospel alone; for these parables directly point to the Lamb of God, our Great High Priest, who taketh away sins by the Sacrifice of Himself. —*J. Ford.*

Whatever seeming contradictions and tautologies may be found in the Bible, it would appear to a considerate man that, as long as the main thing, the true way to happiness, is secured, such accidental things, as frequency of the same expressions, and chronological mistakes, committed by the various transcribers, may be passed by without offence; that many things, which have seemed contradictions, upon examination of the customs and circumstances of the age, these Books were written in, have been found no contradictions; and that thus it may be in all the rest, if we knew all those ways of speaking and reckoning, and naming things, and all the proverbial expressions, then in use; that, in the substantial things of these Books, there hath been no alteration, or corruption, for so many ages together; and that the plain way of writing, used here, and repeating the same thing often,

doth but argue honest simplicity, and want of guile, and unwillingness to impose upon the world, in those, that have written these Books.—*Dr. Horneck.*

From Adam to Noah there was but one man, *Methusala,* who joined hands with both. From Noah to Abraham one man, *Shem,* who saw both for a considerable time. From Abraham to Joseph, one, *Isaac,* Joseph's grandfather. From Joseph to Moses, one, *Amram,* who might have seen Joseph long. These characters of time Moses has carefully preserved.—*Abp. Sumner.*

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 1.—Consider four things; Christ's Baptism, His departure into the wilderness, His fasting, and, lastly, His contest and conquest over the tempter and temptation. In the first, we call to mind our regeneration in the fountain of grace; in the second, our departure from the vanities of the world; in the third, the mortification of the flesh; in the fourth, how to resist the enemy. . . He, that brought ruin into the state of man, began the same by eating; but He, that brought recovery into the ruinated state of Adam, began the same by fasting. . . He fasted *days* and *nights;* whence we may gather, that we must be armed against the tempter, as well in the days of prosperity, as nights of adversity. S. Mark ix. 29.—*Sutton.*

V. 2.—We will not so much as doubt, whether this was a real combat, or only performed in imagination and in a vision, as some of the ancients thought. For this were to question His Baptism also, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, like a dove. We derogate from that authority and power, which our Faith should have over us, by raising questions, where we need not; and, whilst we start up doubts and questions, and then run after to catch them, we commonly lose the Truth. Isa. xxxv. 8.—*Farindon.*

This custom of the Church is held (by most) to be an imitation of our Saviour's fast; an imitation of His

action, not of His miracle. For, as all men are bound to imitate His charity, in curing the sick, yet not His miraculous charity, by curing with a word speaking; so, all men are bound to imitate His humiliation and fasting, but not His miraculous fasting in abstaining from all kinds of sustenance forty days. Wherefore, the Church, which hath enjoined this, tendering our infirmities, hath limited us from feasting, but not ordained absolute fasting, and impossible forbearance of all supplies of nature. We must distinguish; for it is one thing to pamper your enemy; and another to starve and kill your servant. In which respect, we are to observe this custom, as men willing to follow our pattern, but not seek to go even with it, or beyond it. For miracles are ceased; and this is an imitation, not an emulation, of our Saviour's fast. To this observance our Pattern leads us; the Gospel counsels us; the Fathers urge us; the custom of the whole Church draws us; and the law compels us; nay, the very Gentile (the Turk) excites us.—*Wm. Austin.*

We are, by nature, half Angel, half brute. We must rise towards the one, or sink towards the other; and, at length, associate to all eternity either with Angels or devils. To feed, to strengthen, to exercise, the spiritual part of us, is to rise. To feed, to strengthen, to exercise, the brutal part, is to sink and be lost for ever. "We lost the innocence and dignity of our nature by eating," says Athanasius, "and must restore ourselves by abstinence." xv. 16; Rom. viii. 13.—*P. Skelton.*

V. 4.—*Every word.* Never did I see such wonder and wisdom in this Blessed Book, as since I have been obliged to study every expression.—*H. Martyn.*

V. 5.—*In a moment of time.* Satan, in his temptations, employs a hurry and rapidity; he presents a rapid view; he will not leave time for our principles to be called up, but takes us off our guard. Earthly things will not bear inspection. . . Let us contrast the pageantry and the cheat of the world, with eternal realities; till we become impressed, and, like the Apostle, glory only in the Cross of Christ. Eph. vi. 16; Rom. viii. 18.—*R. Cecil.*

All this is, but a false show; death and destruction are in these kingdoms, veiled and dressed up with titles of honour, in purple and state. In this terrestrial paradise thou shalt meet with "a fiery Sword," the wrath of God, and from this imaginary painted Heaven be thrown into hell itself. S. James v. 1–3.—*Farindon.*

V. 6.—"*All* the kingdoms, *All* this power, &c." To make us happy, we require not much less, than everything; to make us miserable, not much less, than nothing will suffice. 1 Kings xxi. 4; Esth. v. 13.—*T. H. Bayley.*

Is delivered unto me. The tempter here confesses that he was not the world's Maker. Therefore it was not the highest order of worship, that he demanded for himself; and, that no inferior worship could possibly be paid to any creature, this Jesus shows; and, much less, paid to Satan. Rev. xix. 10.—*Bengel.*

V. 8.—How is it possible for God to make an intelligent creature to receive its happiness from any thing, but Himself; since this would not only be the giving His glory to another, but in some sort an annihilation of Himself? For, whatever constitutes, or confers our happiness, will, in the reason of the thing, be our God; and we

cannot be persuaded to place our desires, to pay our homage anywhere else. Phil. iii. 8, 9.—*Adam.*

V. 9.—The *high mountains* and *the pinnacles of the Temple* seem to point to Satan's chief temptation, the sin of *pride*, whereby he himself fell, and wherewith he seeks to make havoc of our souls, in things Sacred, even in the very temple of God (2 Thess. ii. 4). How difficult it is, yea, impossible to mortal man, to stand unmoved on the high places of the earth, so as to say, "I refrain my soul and keep it low."—"Get thee behind me, Satan." Ps. cxxxi.; Jer. xlv. 5.—*J. Ford.*

V. 10.—If, after all this, he despairs to prevail upon us, as a devil, he can quickly shift his shape, and "transform himself into an Angel of light," and engage our very consciences unto evil; he can disguise his temptations under impulses of the Holy Spirit, persuade us that what he prompts is our duty, head his "fiery darts" with Scripture sentences, wrap up his poison in the leaves of the Bible, and wound our souls by our consciences. 1 Kings xxii. 22; 2 Cor. ii. 11.—*Bp. Hopkins.*

It is observable here, that Satan not only mutilated the Word of God, by taking from this passage those qualifying expressions, "in all thy ways,"—thy *ways*, but not over precipices—but that he shifted the word "stone" from its *figurative* meaning, as it stands in the Psalm, and quoted it in a *literal* sense, so as to make it applicable to his own infernal purpose. 2 S. Pet. iii. 16.—*J. Ford.*

An adulterous sense crosseth the verity of Scripture, as much as does the corruption of the Text. 2 Cor. ii. 17; iii. 6.—*Tertullian.*

A false interpretation of Scripture causes that the Gospel of the Lord becomes the Gospel of man; or, which is worse, of the devil. 1 S. John iv. 1.—*S. Jerome.*

V. 12.—Because we are not always masters of our own affairs, nor consequently of our time, therefore ought we to have ever ready at hand a good collection of Texts, which contain in few words the power and spirit of Gospel motives, the perfection and beauty of duties, and the substance of advice and counsel; and to fix these so in our memory, that they may serve, as a shield, for us to oppose, as our Saviour did, against the darts of the devil (Eph. vi.), and as a supply of excellent and useful thoughts upon a sudden: so that, in all the little interruptions of business, and the many little vacancies of the day, the mind, which is an active and busy spirit, may never want a proper subject to work upon; much less, lose itself in wild and lazy amusements, or defile itself by vain and vicious thoughts. But we must not only take care that meditation be frequent, but also that it be not loose and roving. To which end, it will be necessary to study ourselves, as well as the Scriptures, and to be intimately acquainted with the advantages and disadvantages of our constitutions; so that, in our meditations on the Scriptures, we may more particularly have an eye to those vices, we are most obnoxious to, and those virtues, which are either more necessary, or more feeble and undergrown. Gen. xxxix. 9; Ps. cxix; Col. iii. 16, 17.—*Dr. Lucas.*

In all battles the trial is, who shall be strongest? The temptation is threefold. 1. To distrust, from the

consideration of want; 2. to presumption, from the Providence and predestination of God; 3. to flat and gross idolatry, from hope of the pomp and glory of the world. First, if we want, the devil concludes, that God cares not for us; secondly, if He care for us, we may do what we please; thirdly, we may have what we please, if we "fall down and worship him."—*Farindon.*

All the temptation. Our Lord's most perfect victory assures the same to us, on our using "the whole armour of God." "Take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the wicked one." "Christ" (writes S. Jerome) "went forth, to overcome the devil: and He delivered him over to His disciples, to be trampled upon." x. 18, 19; Rom. xvi. 20.—*J. Ford.*

V. 13.—*Departed for a season.* There were two remarkable periods of Christ's life, His *intrat* and His *exit,* His entrance into His public Ministry at His Baptism, and His finishing it at His Passion; and at both we have the devil fiercely encountering Him. When the Christian is about some noble enterprise for God's glory, then Satan will lie, like a serpent, in the way, "an adder in the path, that biteth his horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." S. Mark ix. 20; S. John xiv. 30.—*Gurnall.*

It frequently happens, that the enemy permits those, whom he has tempted, to continue some time in quiet, that he may surprise them more easily, when they least think of him, and make them fall into sin by some violent and sudden attack. xi. 24–26.—*S. Gregory.*

V. 16.—*As His custom was.* It had been His constant custom to go to that synagogue of Nazareth, His parish Church, every Sabbath-day; but this is the first time, that He preached there. And in the clause, *He stood up for to read*, there is more than every one observes. He *preached* in other synagogues; but He *read* in none, but this; for he, that *read* in the synagogue, was a member of the synagogue; and He, by reading, showed that He owned Himself, and was owned to be, one of this. Now, what a kind of people the congregation of Nazareth was we may somewhat guess from that passage; "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Conf. v. 29.) . . And yet did He keep Himself, till then, to that congregation, owned Himself a member of it, read in it, as a member of it; till His function called Him, and the fear of His life forced Him, thence.—*Dr. Lightfoot.*

How will the example of our Blessed Lord, in so constantly conforming to the Jewish Church, in the midst of all its corruptions, rise up to condemn those, who separate from any Christian Communion, which holds the Doctrine, and Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ in all essential matters, and which requires of her members no unlawful terms of fellowship! Would that for their own sakes, as well for the peace and beauty of the Church, they would betimes consider this! The whole synagogue worship, like the feast of Dedication, was of human appointment. Now, if we ought to "Submit ourselves to every *ordinance of man* for the Lord's sake," what far higher claims must His own *Divine* institutions of Religion have on our conscientious regard and dutiful obedience? Moreover, not only

Church conformity but (as it appears from the above remark of Dr. Lightfoot) *Parochial Communion* is here commended to us by our Lord's example.—*J. Ford.*

Let me be careful not to injure, by my *manner* of reading the Scriptures, the admirable and important *matter*, which they contain. 1 Cor. xiv. 9, 11.—*Brewster.*

V. 18.—The Gospel is "a word in season to him, that is weary;" therefore it speaks only to him, that is weary, to him, that is seeking rest and finding none; and to him it brings relief, refreshment, and repose. It finds you a bruised reed; it props and supports you. It finds you weeping; and it wipes away all tears from your eyes. It finds you fearful, cheerless, and disquieted; and it gives you courage, hope, and tranquillity. There is a wilderness before her, and the garden of Eden behind; before her is "lamentation, and mourning, and woe;" behind her come "thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Isa. l. 4; Ps. cxix. 54.—*C. Wolfe.*

Humanly speaking, the compassionate character of S. Luke's Gospel may have arisen from this; that this Evangelist was but following the bent of his own temper, as the "beloved Physician;" or, it may have arisen from the circumstances of his life, as the companion of S. Paul, in his preaching among the Gentiles, which might lead him to practical contemplations of this nature, respecting the unbounded compassions of the Gospel.—*Is. Williams.*

V. 20.—*He closed the book.* The exceeding Grace of our Lord, as shown in His first proposals of mercy to

sinners, is here declared by His omitting the concluding verse of the prophet Isaiah, which speaks in awful terms of "the Day of Vengeance of our God." He sought to win them by love; and they, who "refused to hear the voice of the charmer," thereby contracted a double guilt. xiii. 34, 35.—*J. Ford.*

He, who only fears hell, does not so much fear to sin, as to burn; but the person, who hates sin, as hell itself, may be truly said to fear sinning. Wisd. xv. 1, 2; Rom. xii. 1.—*S. Augustine.*

Such is the progress of the love of Christ, and His appearing in pious souls. He comes and entreats us at the first, or rather beseeches us, that we would be so sensible of His kindness, as to let him have a room in our hearts, and to receive from His hands so great a good, as He offers to bless us withal. Rev. iii. 20, 21.—*Bp. Patrick.*

To declare things worthy of God is the work of a mind at rest, and free from outward distractions. For then only will the tongue be well guided in discourse, when the feelings are lulled to a tranquil peace; as the agitated water reflects not the image of him, that looks upon it; but, when it is still and motionless, then the gazer's countenance may be descried. S. Matt. v. 2.—*S. Gregory.*

The majesty of Divine truths is best seen in the stole and gravity of the matron. Tit. ii. 7, 15.—*Farindon.*

Fastened on Him. External feature is generally the impression of the mind upon the body, and words are but

the echo of the thoughts. . . Beauty and grace are certainly used in this text (Ps. xlv. 1), as figures of much higher qualities, which were conspicuous in our Lord, and in Him alone, of all the sons of men. That Image of God, in which Adam was created, in our Lord appeared perfect and entire, in the unspotted innocency of His life, the sanctity of His manners, and His perfect obedience to the Law of God; in His vast powers of mind, intellectual and moral; intellectual, in His comprehension of all knowledge; moral, in His power of resisting all the allurements of vice, and of encountering all the difficulties of virtue and religion, despising hardship and shame, enduring pain and death. This was the beauty, with which He was "adorned beyond the sons of men." S. Matt. vii. 29; Cant. v. 9–16.—*Bp. Horsley.*

V. 22.—The Gospel—what is it, but God's heart in print? The precious promises of the Gospel—what are they, but Heaven's court-rolls, translated into the creature's language? 2 Cor. iii. 3.—*Gurnall.*

Is not this Joseph's Son? The Christian will be careful to avoid those snares, which the devil lays in the way of God's people, when he endeavours to draw off their attention to the Word preached by fixing it on the weaknesses and defects of the preacher. . . He will consider, that he is not now in the theatre, but in the Church; that he came not hither for entertainment, but for edification; that it is not the business, and should not be the aim, of the preacher to please his ear, and to divert his fancy, but to inform his judgment, and to mind him of his duty: he will, therefore, call off his thoughts from

observing any failures, there may be in the language, in the method, in the manner of him, who speaks; and will apply them wholly to those solid truths and useful instructions, which a well disposed hearer can scarce ever be at a loss to find in the most negligent and least judicious discourses of those, who sincerely handle the Word of God. He will attend more to the matter and substance of what is taught, than to the air and tone of the preacher; and, whilst his instructions are like those of S. Paul, "weighty and powerful," he will not object against him, as we find some did against S. Paul, that "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." He will consider, that all the defects of the preacher cannot hurt him, unless he himself pleases; and, that the wholesome truths, which he delivers, may save him, if he pleases; that, therefore, he is bound in charity to overlook those, but that he cannot, without danger to his soul, neglect or despise these. S. Matt. x. 40; 1 Thess. ii. 13; Gal. iv. 13–15.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

V. 29.—There may be as much alienation of heart from God under a profession of religion, as in the avowed rejection of it. These Nazarites sinned in both ways. Verse 15.—*J. Ford.*

V. 30.—Understand that His being apprehended by the Jews was the result of His own will, and not of external compulsion; He was not so much captured by them, as given up by Himself. For, when He so wills it, He is taken, or is let loose. That He is not taken, is the work of His Godhead; that He is taken, is His own will. S. John x. 18.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 32.—There was an order of Doctors among the Jews, that professed that way to teach the people, by Parables and dark sayings; and these were the powerfullest teachers among them; for they had their very name (Mosselim) from power and dominion; they had a power and dominion over the affections of their disciples, because teaching them by an obscure way they created an admiration and a reverence in their hearers, and laid a necessity of returning again to them, for the interpretation of those dark Parables. . . . In this way of teaching our Saviour abounded and excelled; for, when it is said, "He taught them as one, having authority," and, when it is said, *They were astonished at His doctrine; for His word was with power*, they refer that to this manner of teaching, that He astonished them with these reserved and dark sayings, and by the subsequent interpretation thereof. . . For these Parables and comparisons of a remote signification were called by the Jews, *Potestates*, powerful insinuations; as among the Greeks the same things were called *Axiomata*, dignities; and of Christ it is said, "Without a Parable spake He not." Prov. i. 1–6; Eccl. xii. 9–11; Hos. xii. 10; S. Matt. xiii. 34.—*Dr. Donne.*

The Preacher's *word* is *with power*, when his life accords with his sermon. S. Matt. vii. 29; Acts i. 1; xi. 24; 1 Tim. iv. 16.—*Bede.*

V. 34.—*A spirit of an unclean devil—What have we to do with Thee?* No matter what may be the cause, but so it is, that sensual indulgences, over and above their proper criminality, as sins, as offences against God's

Commands, have a specific effect upon the heart of man, in destroying the religious principle within him ; or, still more surely, in preventing the formation of that principle. It either induces an open profaneness of conversation and behaviour, which scorns and contemns religion ; a kind of profligacy, which rejects and sets at naught the whole thing ; or, it brings upon the heart an averseness to the subject, a fixed dislike and reluctance to enter upon its concerns in any way whatever. . . It has a specific effect upon the mind. The heart is rendered unsusceptible of religious impressions, incapable of a serious regard to religion. And this effect belongs to sins of sensuality more, than to other sins. It is a consequence, which almost universally follows from them. Conf. ix. 40.—*Paley.*

He, that never hopes to receive any *good*, will continue in doing evil. Despair of mercy causeth a despising of the Law. The apostate Angels, who are without the reserves of pardon, are confirmed in their rebellion ; their guilt is mixed with fury ; they persist in their war against God, though they know the issue will be deadly to them. And, had there not been an early revelation of mercy to Adam, he had been incorrigibly wicked, as the devils ; for despair had inflamed his hatred against God, which is, of all the passions, the most incurable. . . as seated in the superior part of the soul. Ps. iv. 6 ; Gen. iv. 13–16. —*Dr. Bates.*

V. 35.—Might not this public confession of the demon, especially as expressed in the language of adulation, have favoured, if not suggested, the subsequent calumnious

accusation of the Pharisees, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of the devils?" Did the Lord for this *rebuke* him?—*J. Ford.*

Hurt him not. In the same Scripture (1 S. Pet. v. 8) which so forcibly describes the power, the malice, and the rage of Satan against us, we are mercifully assured, for our comfort, of his utter helplessness to do us harm, unless it be "given unto him from above." He "goes about like a roaring lion;" and yet he seeks "whom he *may* devour." It is our negligence, or unbelief, which, depriving us of the Divine help, gives him the advantage. He is strong, not in himself, but in our weakness. He may make ready his bow, and shoot his arrow, and even empty all his quiver against us; but it is our own heart's lust, that gives point to the arrow, and kindles the fiery dart into a flame of death. Verse 9.—*J. Ford.*

V. 36.—*Power* is to be distinguished from *authority.* The latter term may express an ability, conveyed to us by some superior, for the performance of certain acts; but power is an ability of ourselves, and, absolutely, it "belongeth unto God." Thus, while the unclean spirit bare testimony to the Humanity of Christ, and to His Divinity, to His being Jesus *of Nazareth*, and also *the Holy One of* God, these inhabitants of Capernaum may be regarded by their exclamation of wonder, as attesting the same ever blessed glorious Truth of our Lord's two-fold Nature; for Christ cast out devils by an authority, derived from His Father, as *man;* and by His own power, as God.—*J. Ford.*

V. 39.—At verse 35, He *rebuked* the unclean spirit; and here He *rebukes the fever*, which would therefore seem to be only another form of Satanic possession; sicknesses being judicially sent, or permitted, as the consequences of sin. Were there no sins, there would be no scourges. S. Matt. viii. 26.—*J. Ford.*

V. 40.—*When the sun was setting—divers diseases.* It is almost awful to look at the overwhelming beauty around me, and then think of moral evil: it seems as if Heaven and hell, instead of being separated by a great gulf from one another, were absolutely on each other's confines, and indeed "not far from every one of us." Might the sense of moral evil be as strong in me, as my delight in external beauty! For, in a deep sense of moral evil, more perhaps than in anything else, abides a saving knowledge of God.—*Dr. Arnold.*

A little after sunset has been called the holiest of time; which the poet loves for its richness, the philosopher for its quiet, and the Christian for its purity.—*Winter.*

He might have healed them with a word; but *He laid on his hands:* He might have laid His hands on *some*, while He healed all; but He laid His hands *on every one of them.* Memorable and marvellous act! How many thoughts does it suggest to the pious reflecting disciple! How great that love, which spared no pains in the communication of its blessings! How important in things Sacred and Sacramental the strict observance of the outward and visible signs of Grace! How blessed the work of Bishops, in administering the rite of Confirmation,

when they follow the example of Christ, and, as the Church directs, "Lay their hands upon the head of *every one* (candidate) severally." How still more blessed is the Minister's office, when he delivers the consecrated elements to the communicants individually, conveying to each faithful soul that Body and Blood, which was given for all, and which we thus receive, even as if given for ourselves alone. Hence we learn to say, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me* !"—*J. Ford.*

V. 43.—*Other cities also.* The light, diffused on every side from its fountain, extendeth to the extremities of heaven, filling the whole circle of creation, penetrating even to the inmost substances of grosser bodies, and acting in and through all other matter, as the general cause of life and motion. Thus unbounded and efficacious was the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, when He sent out His Word, enlightening and enlivening all things by the glory of His grace. His celestial rays, like those of the sun, took their circuit round the earth; they went forth out of Judæa into all parts of the habitable world, and there was no corner of it, so remote, as to be without the reach of their penetrating and healing power. Ps. lxviii. 11; Col. i. 6, 23.—*Bp. Horne.*

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 2.—The honest industry of the fishermen is recompensed with their elevation to the Apostleship. The zeal of the people, *pressing upon Him to hear the word of God,* is at the same time rewarded by the appointment over them of a Heaven-sent Ministry with all its unnumbered benefits. We cannot wait upon God, nor serve Him in vain. i. 8, 11; ii. 8, 9.—*J. Ford.*

We are indebted to S. Gregory for the shrewd observation, that Christ called these fishermen to the Apostolic office, not while they were hauling in their nets to the shore, but when they were "casting them into the sea" (S. Matt. iv. 18); to show us, that the preacher is not bound to catch souls by converting them to God, but only to employ with diligence those means of grace, which subserve that great end. . . The preacher should not be discouraged, when all his efforts fail of the wished-for success; but he should rather remember, that, in the last Day, every one shall receive a reward, proportionate to his toil, rather than to his success: every man shall "receive his own reward, according to his own *labour,*" not according to the fruits of it.—*Segneri.*

V. 5.—The *net,* to fish for men, is commonly the Word truly preached; the threads are the words of persuasion; the knots the arguments of reason; the plummets are the articles and grounds of the faith. This net is to be

wove by study and pains, to be *let doum* and loosed by preaching, to be gathered up by calling men to account of what was heard, what they have done upon it; it is *washed* and cleansed by our tears and prayers, and spread and dried by our charity and mortified affections. And this is the net, that we must let down, "though we catch nothing," and "at His word it is to be let down." His Word is to be the length and breadth, the whole rule and measure of all *our* sermons, all *your* actions. Leave off our work we must not, because it does not answer us with success; but to our work again, and see where we erred, and *mend* it; find what was the occasion of our ill success, our *taking nought*, and avoid it. If we prided ourselves too much in our own skill or wisdom, or trusted too much upon the goodness of our own works and labours, or through the darkness of ignorance could not well see what to do, or through the thick night of sins miscarried in it, or for want of God's implored assistance missed of our success, let us now mend all, by "ruling ourselves," and all our actions, "according to His Word." His Word will teach us that art, which shall not fail us; His Word shall give us humility to cast deep enough; His Word will be a lantern to enlighten our night, that we may see our way, and what to do; His Word will bring us near Himself; that we may better hear His counsel and obey His voice, and bring Him nearer us, that He may Bless us. Hab. i. 16.—*Dr. Mark Frank.*

V. 6.—Consider what S. Peter did, when, in his own name, he cast out his nets; and you will see herein that

you can do nothing of yourself, and what help you may expect of your own ability and labour: and then consider what he did, when he cast them out in the Name of Jesus Christ; and hereby you will know what you are able to do by grace and God's assistance. The sight of the one will teach you to have no confidence at all in yourself; and the sight of the other will give you all confidence in God, making you expect all from Him: and, by this means, neither the consideration of those great things, which it shall please God to execute by your help, will inspire any vanity into you; nor the consideration of your own weakness will at all diminish your courage. 2 Cor. iii. 5; ii. 14.—*Alph. Rodriguez.*

V. 7.—The ship, beginning to *sink*, by reason of the very success of the fishermen, may warn us of the spiritual danger, which attends the Ministers of Christ, when many by their labours seem to be brought unto the Lord. The danger is, lest they should ascribe ought of the prosperous issue of their Ministry to themselves, and so "sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag." In this point of view, it was a most seasonable warning to the Apostles, before they were made by Christ "fishers of men." Ps. cxv. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 6.—*J. Ford.*

V. 8.—It is adversity, rather than prosperity, which draws us to the Lord. It was not the full net, but *the sinking ship*, which prostrated Simon at the feet of Jesus, and made him feel his need of mercy. xv. 14.—*J. Ford.*

How interesting to contrast these awful fears and misgivings of a *sinful man's* conscience, arising from a sense

of the glorious Majesty of God in Christ, with the faith, the trust, the holy confidence, and even the chastened familiarity, displayed by S. Peter and the other Apostles, the night before their Lord's sufferings, when, on His announcing His going away from them, "sorrow filled their hearts." Their language then was not "*Depart from me,*" but, "Abide with us;" they were then afraid of losing that Presenee, which now awed, confounded, and overcame them. (S. John xiii. 9; S. Luke xxiv. 29.) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" but faith inspires increasing confidence; and love, when perfected, "casteth out fear." Now, if we can attain, through grace, in this life, to any such "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," what will the maturity of our Blessedness, and the full harvest of our joy be, in the life to come? Wisd. iv. 16–18; 1 S. Peter i. 7–9.—*J. Ford.*

His purpose was, that the work should be ascribed to the workman, not to the instrument; to Himself, not to them. He sent not out orators, rhetoricians, strong or fair spoken men, to work upon these fishermen; but by these fishermen He hath reduced all those Kings and Emperors, and States, which have embraced the Christian religion these thousand and six hundred years. 1 Cor. i. —*Dr. Donne.*

V. 10.—This title of *fisher* sets forth more the work of the ingathering of souls, the Missionary activity; that of *shepherd* more the tending and nourishing of souls, that have been ingathered. This therefore fitly comes first. It was said to Peter, *Thou shalt catch men,* before it was said to him, "Feed My sheep;" and each time a

different commission, or at least a different side of the commission is expressed ; he shall be both Evangelist, and Pastor. Eph. iv. 11, 12 ; S. John iv. 37, 38.—*R. C. Trench.*

V. 13.—Grant a courtesy, if you intend it at all, willingly and speedily ; for that doubles it : to keep long in suspense is churlish ; for by long expectation the passion to the favour dies. 2 Cor. ix. 7.—*Palmer.*

On some occasions it would seem, as if our Lord, being desirous to express some lesson, worked a miracle. . . When He *touched* the leper in healing him, thereby taking on Himself the uncleanness, and standing before God, as unclean Himself, according to the Law, instead of the leper, He taught us more, than words could have done, that, in forgiving our sins, and removing their consequences, He took them upon Himself before God, that "He bare our griefs, and carried our sorrows," and that "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him ;" that His releasing us was not without suffering Himself in our stead. 2 Cor. v. 21.—*Is. Williams.*

I will. Every Word of God is an argument of His Will ; every action is an interpreter of His Word ; so that, howsoever He reveals Himself, either in His Scriptures or in His works, so certainly He wishes and intends to us in His secret counsels. Every protestation of His love, every indignation at our stubbornness, every mercy conferred on us, and that not insidiously, but with an intent to do us good, are but ways and methods to express His Will ; are but rays, and emissions, and gleams of that

Eternal Love, which He exhibits to the world. . . Beloved, there is not a creature here, that hath reason to doubt that Christ was sent to Die for *him*, and by that death hath purchased his right to life. Only do but come in; do but suffer yourselves to live, and Christ to have died; do not uncrucify Christ by crucifying Him again by your unbelief; do not disclaim the Salvation, that claims right and title to you; and then the Angels shall be as full of joy to see you in heaven, as God is willing, nay desirous, to bring you thither; and Christ as ready to bestow that inheritance upon you at His second coming, as at His first to purchase it. Isa. i. 19; Acts xiii. 46.—*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 14.—Confess that sin, or sins, which most perplexes thee, to some godly Minister, who by Absolution may pronounce and apply pardon unto thee (S. Matt. xvi. 19; S. John xx. 22, 23). When this ordinance of Confession is commended, as convenient, not commanded as necessary; left free, not forced; in cases of extremity sovereign use may be made, and hath been found thereof: neither Magistrate nor Minister carrying the Sword or the Keys in vain. Josh. vii. 19; 2 Sam. xii. 13; S. Matt. iii. 6; Rom. xiii. 4.—*T. Fuller.*

No kind of Confession, either public or private, is disallowed by our Church, that is any way requisite for the due execution of the ancient power of the Keys, which Christ bestowed on the Church.—*Abp. Usher.*

V. 16.—When Christ is amongst men, He is doing them good; and, when He is not amongst them, He is

conversing with God: and otherwise He could not do, in regard of the holiness of His nature,—love to man, and union with God. iv. 40–42.—*Dr. Lightfoot.*

V. 20.—Bodily diseases, as they were introduced by sin, so they are pictures and representations of corresponding disorders, produced by the same sin in our souls, which thereby become subject to the fever of anger, the dropsy of covetousness, the leprosy of uncleanness, the lunacy of ambition, and, among other maladies, to the *palsy* of spiritual sloth and listlessness in things, pertaining to the work of our Salvation. This is the last of those called "the seven deadly sins;" and, when it seizes upon a man, it takes away the use of his powers and faculties in spiritual, exactly as the palsy does in matters temporal. . . If they, that are spiritually *sick of the palsy*, are not able to go to Christ, of themselves, by repentance and faith, let them beg the assistance of kind and charitable friends . . more especially, let them "send for the Elders of the Church," whose continual employment it is to present sinners to Christ, and who, like the friends of the man sick of the palsy, should never desist from their labours of love, but use a holy violence in their endeavours, till they have laid their patients at the feet of Jesus, and prevailed for a cure.—*Bp. Horne.*

One Joseph in Egypt is a storehouse to all the kingdom; one Elisha, an army of chariots and horsemen unto Israel; one Moses, a fence to keep out an inundation of wrath, which was breaking in upon the people; one Paul, a haven, an anchor, a deliverance to all, that were in the ship with him.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 22.—In this case he discloses another sign, and that no small one, of His own Godhead, and of His equality in honour with the Father. For, whereas they said, "To unbind sins pertains to God only," He not only unbinds sins; but, before this, He makes another kind of display in a thing, which pertained to God only—the publishing the secrets in the heart: for neither had they uttered what they were thinking. Jer. xvii. 10.—*S. Chrysostom.*

The friends of the palsied man uttered no prayer; yet the Lord *saw their faith*, and heard the prayer of faith, which was in their hearts. The Scribes and Pharisees, on the other hand, uttered no words of blasphemy; yet He *perceived their thoughts.* We have to do with a God, who looks within us, and treats us accordingly. "His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good;" as G. Herbert quaintly says, "God sees hearts, as we see faces." What a difference there is, moreover, between *faith*, and a man's *thoughts.* Heb. iv. 12, 13.—*J. Ford.*

V. 25.—He, who cannot rise and stand upright, but either continues grovelling on the earth, or falls back, as soon as he gets up, is not cured of his spiritual leprosy. The sinner's *bed* is everything, which he loves, and in which he finds his rest and satisfaction upon earth, his criminal inclinations, and the objects of his passions. A true conversion *takes up*, and carries away, everything of this nature.—*Quesnel.*

V. 27.—We are in the hands of a cunning workman, that of the knottiest and crookedest timber can make rafters and ceilings for his own house, that can square the

marble and flint, as well as the freest stone. Jer. xviii. 6; Ex. iv. 10, 11.—*Bp. Hall.*

Sitting at the receipt of custom. Hereby is shown the virtue of Christ calling him; seeing He drew him, as it were, out of the midst of the sea of evils; even as He brought back Paul, burning with rage and madness against the Church, and took other disciples from their fishing, when they were most busy in it.—*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 29.—*A great feast.* A feast for all comers *(Beza* and *Leigh).* This "open house" may represent to us the Christian feast, the abundant riches of Christ's salvation, prepared in the Church for all people, "without money and without price" to be paid by them. Of it the Evangelist S. Matthew, a pardoned publican, had himself largely partaken; and now, by means of his Gospel, he seems to perpetuate the same spiritual feast of good things, inviting to it sinners of all ages, and, more especially, bidding them hear those comfortable words, which he alone, of the Evangelists, was instructed to record, "Come unto Me, all ye, that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." See also S. Matt. xxii. 4.—*J. Ford.*

V. 31.—Would you know what is the reason, that the blessed Jesus, the most glorious and benevolent person, that ever appeared in our world, is so generally neglected? Oh, why is His love forgotten by those very creatures, for whom He shed His Blood? Why are there not more longings and cries for Him? Why is not a Saviour, an Almighty and complete Saviour, more sought after by

perishing sinners? Why is His Name of so little importance among them? How comes it to pass, that He may continue for months, for years, for scores of years, offering salvation to them; intreating, commanding, and persuading them to accept it, and warning them of the dreadful ruin, they will bring on themselves by rejecting it? Whence is it, that, after all, "He is despised and rejected of men," and that but very few will give Him suitable entertainment? Whence is this shocking conduct in reasonable creatures? Oh, it is the same old reason still; they are whole-hearted, and do not feel themselves dangerously ill; and how then can they be solicitous about a Physician? xviii 11; S. John ix. 40.—*S. Davies.*

V. 34.—Every man, whose works are good, is the *son of the Bridegroom;* he has the Bridegroom *with* him, even Christ, and fasts not, that is, does no work of repentance, because he does not sin; but when *the Bridegroom is taken away,* by the man's falling into sin, then he fasts, and is penitent, that he may cure his sin. S. John xvii. 12.—*Theophylact.*

V. 37.—It fares with many hearers of sermons, as it doth with small and narrow-mouthed vessels: either, we pour too fast, and so much runs by; or, else, too much, and so much runs over. S. Mark iv. 33.—*Farindon.*

Custom is generally much too strong for the most resolute resolver, though furnished for the assault with all the weapons of philosophy. "He, that endeavours," says Bacon, "to free himself from an ill habit, must not change

too much at a time, lest he should be discouraged by difficulty; nor *too little*, for then he will make but slow advances." xiv. 28.—*Dr. Johnson.*

V. 38.—All things are done by degrees; all things, through God's grace, may come in time, but not at once. As well might a child think to grow at once into a man, as the incipient penitent become suddenly, like S. Paul "the aged." . . When men are in the first fervour of penitence, they should be careful not to act on their own private judgment, and without proper advice. . . We should, all of us, be saved a great deal of suffering of various kinds, if we would but persuade ourselves, that we are not (always) the best judges, whether of our own condition, or of God's Will towards us. Tobit iv. 18, 19. —*J. H. Newman.*

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 2.—That our reproofs may have nothing of a Pharisaic air, we must take care to distinguish betwixt faults of infirmity, and presumptuous sins; betwixt slips through inadvertency, and wilful deliberate transgressions; betwixt mistakes in breeding and good manners, and offending in the great points of morality; betwixt acting against human laws, and breaking the Commandments of God; betwixt failing in a circumstance and ceremony, and being faulty in the "weightier matters of the Law;" betwixt transient acts, and inveterate habits, of sin; betwixt such sins, as our brethren have fallen into through the violence of temptations, and such, as they have so far acted the devil's part in, that they have with much pain solicited themselves, and others, to the commission of it. Prov. xxv. 11, 12; S. Jude 22, 23.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

V. 3.—Whenever the Lord speaks for His servants *(i.e.* His disciples), He brings forward servants; as, for example, *David,* and the *priests;* but when for Himself, He introduces His Father; as in that place, "My Father worketh hitherto; and I work." S. John v. 17.—*S. Chrysostom.*

The Jewish Sabbath was partly of political institution, and partly of moral obligation. So far as it was a political appointment, designed to preserve the Jews distinct from other nations, it is abrogated; so far as it was of moral

obligation, it remains in force. Our Lord evidently designed to relax the strictness of the observance. Christianity is not a hedge, placed round a peculiar people. A slave might enter into the spirit of Christianity, though obliged to work, as a slave, on the Sabbath; he might be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," though in the mines of Patmos. I Cor. vii. 22.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 5.—Our Saviour repeatedly condemns the superstitious manner of keeping the Sabbath; yet He has never made a remark, that has a tendency to lower the Sabbath itself; and His declaration, that it was "made for man," seems to imply, that it was designed to continue, as long as the race, for whose sake it was made. . . As the rigid and servile observance of the Sabbath is censured so often by our Lord, there are persons in the present age, when the opposite error has succeeded, who justify the laxity of their own practice from His example and remarks. His example, however, when He dispenses with it, cannot be pleaded by us, who are not, like Him, *Lord of the Sabbath;* and His remarks do not extend beyond works of necessity and charity; and, as He assures us, that "God prefers mercy to sacrifice" (Hos. vi. 6), we need not scruple, whenever the two interfere, to omit the appropriate duties of the day: but let us not deceive ourselves, but remember that they cannot be said fairly to interfere, when the work proposed may be done, as well on the day after. 2 Cor. iii. 17; 1 S. Pet. ii. 16. *Dr. Macbride.*

How prone are we to censure others, before we are informed of their true circumstances! How ready, O

Lord, art Thou to excuse the innocent, and industriously argue in defence of the truth! Thou knowest the meaning of those heavenly words, and delightest in their mildest sense, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Deliver us, O Lord, from pretending a false necessity to dispense with Thy discipline; deliver us from scrupling at a true necessity to prejudice with our affected rigour the end of discipline. Teach us, in Thy own sense, O Lord, to practise this, Thy rule, and to "have mercy and not sacrifice." Rom. xiv.—*Austin.*

V. 9.—Positive institutions—I suppose all those, which Christianity enjoins—are means to a moral end; and the end must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is the observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise, than as it proceeds from a moral principle. . . The moral Law is, moreover, written in our hearts, interwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the Author of it—which is to be preferred, when they interfere.—*Bp. Butler.*

V. 10.—*Rise—stand forth in the midst—stretch forth thy hand.* Christ here mystically teaches us four things, necessary to every penitent—that he should arise from his state of guilt, by works worthy of penance; that he should stand in a state of grace, by perseverance; that he should stand "in the midst," by the clear light of a holy example; that he should stretch forth his hand in all good works. xix. 8.—*Ludolphus.*

The *hand* is the organ of that peculiar sense, which

most certainly assures us of the reality of substances within our reach (S. John xx. 27). Hence, figuratively it expresses the power of faith, "the substance" handled, felt, and realized, of things unseen and eternal (Heb. xi. 1). "Who hath touched Me?" saith the Lord. God only can restore the withered hand. God only can give us faith. But, when He sees that we have a willing mind, "a good and honest heart," desiring that, which He promises, struggling to be set free from the infirmity of sin, and making an effort at His command, then He secretly inspires grace and strength into our helplessness; and so the impotent hand, that was stretched out to receive its cure, being now made whole, is uplifted in praise of our great Deliverer. He "makes us willing in the day of His power." "Through grace, we obey the calling:" and, like the leper, "as we go, we are healed." Ps. cxix. 32.—*J. Ford.*

The impotency of man must not prejudice God's authority, nor diminish man's duty.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 12.—The life of Christ contains all our duties towards God and man, expressed in the most perfect manner, and our motives to perform them. We may clearly see in His deportment innocent wisdom, prudent simplicity, compassionate zeal, perfect patience, the courage of faith (Conf. Ver. 6, 7, 8), the joy of hope, the tenderness and care of love, incomparable meekness, modesty, humility, and purity. He spent *the night, in communion with* God; and the day, in charity to men.—*Dr. Bates.*

All night. Retirement secures me from what would be too much of this world's din. Thus I get leisure for

building up myself in a recollected consciousness of God; without which, we are liable to pass away our term of life, we know not how. Very important it is to discern the golden opportunities, which God gives us for this purpose, as well as the precious moments of day or night, when He is specially nigh to us. Meditation is sweet to me at all times, but particularly in the night season.—*Bengel.*

Moses and the Prophets prayed to God, *before* the performance of miracles; our Lord prayed to His Father *after.* Only in the case of Lazarus He prayed before; and this was openly to disprove the calumnious charge urged against Him, to show that He was not in league with Beelzebub, that He did not cast out devils in his name.—*J. Ford.*

V. 13.—*When it was day.* Let secret prayer by yourself be constantly performed, before the work of the day be undertaken. It is much better to go from prayer to business, than from business to prayer, in regard of the mind's freedom from distracting thoughts. Because, also, if the world gets the start of religion in the morning, it is hard for religion to overtake the world all the day after. iv. 42; Ps. cxliii. 8.—*Burkit.*

The number *twelve* indicated the future restoration of the Church. For, as the people sprang from the twelve Patriarchs, so now does Christ recall their scattered fragments to the remembrance of their origin, so that they may entertain a sure hope of their re-establishment. S. Matt. xix. 28.—*Calvin.*

V. 16.—The wickedness of an evil priest hurts only

himself; but your separation may hurt you, and the guilt of that lie at your door. . . S. Augustine frequently treats of this subject, and saith; "It is more reasonable we should tolerate the evil for the sake of those, that are good, than forsake the good, upon the account of those, that are evil:" and he thinks such a separation, as preposterous, as it would be for "a traveller to go back, because the mile-stone, which directs others in the way, doth not stir itself." 1 S. Peter ii. 18. —*Dean Comber.*

V. 19.—This *touch* of Christ to heal men's bodies is the figure and token of His spiritual touch in His Sacraments, to heal our souls. He touches us, when we are Baptised, "taking us up in His arms and blessing us," and making us very members of Himself, "bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh." He touches us, by the hand of His servants, the Bishops, when we are Confirmed. He touches still more nearly, more awfully, more inwardly, when we worthily receive the Holy Communion. For then we really and "spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood; we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us." Thus He touches us all over, within and without, as a perfect living medicine, entering into our whole souls and bodies, and turning every part of them into the likeness of Himself. —*Plain Sermons.*

V. 20.—The discourse of our Lord, here recorded by S. Luke, seems to have prepared the way for the Sermon on *the Mount;* the convenience of the increasing number of hearers rendering it necessary for our Lord to leave *the*

plain, and to ascend some rising eminence. S. Matt. v. 1. From our Lord's taking occasion, on the second delivery of His discourse, to vindicate the Law from the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, it would appear, that some of their body had now become His auditors; though Dr. Lightfoot observes, that "S. Luke, writing for the service of the Gentiles, passeth over what respecteth the Jews." The identity of the two discourses is shown by the fact, that some things like, or the same, are recorded by both Evangelists, before and after the time of their several deliveries. Ludolphus, however, reverses the order in this respect, making the Sermon on the Mount precede that on the plain; and he remarks that from the circumstances of Christ's *sitting* on the former occasion, when He particularly instructed His disciples, and *standing* on the latter, when His instructions were of a more general nature, that the custom has arisen in the Church, that the preacher to the laity should stand up, as calling them to warfare and exertion; whereas the preacher to the Clergy should sit down, as calling them to rest and contemplation. Finally, the expression of S. Luke, vii. 1, "Now when He had ended *all* His sayings, *in the audience of the people*," may refer to the account, given by S. Matthew.—*J. Ford.*

I am inclined to think, that the discourse in S. Luke is not the same, as that in S. Matthew, but a repetition of the substance of it on some other occasion; and, while the expression in S. Matthew fixes the term to a spiritual sense, that in S. Luke might safely have a more literal bearing; because it is not "*Blessed are the poor*," but

"*Ye poor; Ye*, who have made the right use of your outward circumstances, and are become My disciples, so very few of whom are to be found among the more affluent.—*A. Knox.*

S. Matthew mentions eight Beatitudes; S. Luke only four: but "the four," as S. Ambrose says, "are found in the eight, and the eight are resolved into the four." Meekness and peaceableness are contained under the virtue of patience; purity of heart is allied to poverty of spirit; mercifulness belongs to hunger after righteousness. S. Luke subjoins the sentences of punishment, that the truth of the four Beatitudes may appear more forcibly from the contrast of the woes, severally opposed to them. —*Ludolphus.*

Blessed are. The farthest, that any of the philosophers went, in the discovery of Blessedness, was but to come to that—"*No one before death,*" to pronounce that no man can be called Blessed, before his death; not that they had found what kind of better blessedness they went to, after their death; but that still, till death, they were sure every man was subject unto new miseries, and interruptions of every thing, which they could have called blessedness. The Christian philosophy goes further. It shows us a perfecter blessedness, than they conceived, for the next life; and it imparts that blessedness to this life also. . . For this world and the next are not two houses, but two rooms; a gallery to pass through, and a lodging to rest in, in the same house, under one roof, Jesus Christ. The militant and the triumphant are not two Churches; but this the porch, and that the chancel,

of the same Church, which are under one head, Jesus Christ: so the joy and the sense of salvation, which the "pure in heart" have here, is not a joy, severed from the joy of Heaven; but a joy, that begins in us here, and continues, and accompanies us thither, and then flows on, and dilates itself to an infinite expansion . . the plenary consummation thereof being respited, till we "see God." Rom. vi. 22; 1 S. John. i. 3.—*Dr. Donne.*

God has two thrones: one, in the highest heavens; the other, in the lowest hearts. Isa. lvii. 15.—*Wright.*

V. 21.—Nothing can be our happiness in this life, but what is to be the foundation of it in the next. If I cannot serve God and my Saviour with delight, and make a kind of heaven of it, here, He has no other heaven for me hereafter. Ps. lxxiii. 23–26.—*Adam.*

Happy the soul, that, in the lucid intervals of a wounded conscience, can praise God for the same. Music is sweetest, near or over rivers, where the echo thereof is but rebounded by the water. Praise for pensiveness, thanks for tears, and blessing God over the floods of affliction, makes the most melodious music in the ear of heaven. Ps. lvi. 8; cxxvi. 6.—*T. Fuller.*

V. 23.—*Heaven* is the universal measure of all things earthly. Riches, pleasures, honours, will not profit there. —*Bp. Medley.*

How did the Martyrs glory in their sufferings for Christ, calling their chains of iron chains of gold, and their manacles bracelets! Heb. xi. 25, 26.—*Flavel.*

Hearken to what the blessed Luke saith, that "they

departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's Name." To all others, indeed, it seems to be foolishness, that to suffer shame is to be "counted worthy," that to suffer shame is to "rejoice." But to them, that understand the love of Christ, this is esteemed, of all things, the most blessed. Were any to offer me my choice, the whole Heaven, or that chain (Eph. iv. 1), I would prefer that chain. Were any to ask, whether he should place me on high with the Angels, or with S. Paul in his bonds? I would choose the prison. Were any about to change me into one of those Powers, that are in Heaven, that are round about the Throne, or into such a prisoner, as this, I would choose to be such a prisoner. Nothing is there more noble, than to suffer any evil for Christ's sake. I count not S. Paul so happy, because he was "caught up into Paradise," as because he was cast into the dungeon. I count him not so happy, because he "heard unspeakable words," as because he endured those bonds. I count him not so happy, because he was "caught up into the third Heaven," as I count him happy for those bonds' sake. For, that these latter are greater than the former, hear how even he himself knew this; for he saith not, I, who "heard unspeakable words," beseech you; but what? "I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you!" Acts xiii. 52; Philem. 9—*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 24.—Let the full force of the word, *consolation*, be observed. It is used by way of contrast to the comfort, which is promised to the Christian in the list of Beatitudes. There is something then very fearful in the

intimation of the text, that those, who have riches, thereby receive their portion, such as it is, in full, instead of the heavenly gift of the Gospel. xvi. 25; xviii. 24, 25.—*J. H. Newman.*

Consolation. What was somewhere truly and beautifully observed by S. Augustine may serve to illustrate the preceding extract. All the pleasures of this world are the *consolations* of the unhappy, rather than the joys of the Blessed.—*J. Ford.*

V. 26.—*False Prophets.* Nothing in the world is more full of complacency in itself, nor better received by men, than the office of the Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, if it be only discharged in a formal, or a flattering, manner; but in the sight of God there is nothing more base, more wretched, or more damnable. Jer. xxiii. 1; Ezek. xxxiv. —*S. Augustine.*

V. 27.—*Unto you which hear.* It is an excellent sentence of the most eloquent orator, that, "Arts would be happy, if none did judge of them, but only artists." And, lest I should seem to borrow an example only from profane writers, this is the very thing, which the prophets represent in other words (Ecclus. xxv. 9), "Blessed is he, that speaketh in the ears of *them, that hearken.*"—*Bp. Patrick.*

V. 28.—*Pray for them, &c.* If his soul be inflamed with anger, that anger (by means of fervent *prayer)* is lulled to rest; if passions rage within him, those passions are extinguished; if envy consume his peace, with ease it is expelled. As when the orb of day arises in unclouded glory, the wild beasts of the desert are dispersed, and seek

the shelter of their dens; so when *prayer*, refulgent as a sunbeam, arises from our hearts, and sits enthroned upon our lips, the whole intellect is lighted up, and each unreasonable and unholy passion flees away. Could we but pray with fervour, even were Satan himself to appear, instantaneously he would fly; were the very gates of Hell to yawn upon us, they would close again. S. James v. 17. —*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 29.—The things, which are done by the Saints in the New Testament, profit, as *examples*, for understanding those Scriptures, which are modelled into the form of *precepts*. Thus we read in S. Luke vi. 29, "*Whoso smiteth thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also.*" Now there is no example of patience more perfect than that of the Lord; yet He, when He was smitten, said not, "Behold the other cheek," but, "*If I have spoken, &c.;*" hereby showing us, that the turning of the other cheek should be *in the heart*. Indeed, the Lord was ready not only to be smitten on the cheek for the salvation of men, but to be crucified with His whole Body. S. John xviii. 23.—*S. Augustine.*

Be not sensitive to take any thing, as a personal offence to yourself; for this is but one of the many ways, in which man "disquieteth himself in vain." All personal affronts, real, or imaginary, we must make up our minds never to regard for a moment. 2 Sam. xvi. 10.—*Bengel.*

Endeavour to subdue all thy irascible, as well as concupiscible, affections. The sum of all humanity, and the height of moral perfection, is, "Bear and forbear."—*F. Quarles.*

V. 30.—Remember, that, as God approveth not alms, or any other work, without charity, so neither charity itself without discretion. Relieve the poor; but those, who are *poor indeed;* and the poor indeed are they, who not only want the things they ask, but want also the means to get without asking. 1 Tim. v. 3; Ecclus. xii. 1–7.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

We must not interpret this of men's taking away our goods, *by violence;* the work in the original signifying a bare *taking,* and not properly a *taking away.* For, when goods are so taken by force, were not Christians to ask them again, nor to endeavour to resume, or recover them, their condition would be too sad, as being exposed to rapine without remedy. Therefore, the genuine sense of the words must be, that, when an indigent person taketh anything of us in the way of *borrowing,* he is to be the sole gainer by it; at least, we are to demand nothing for lending it. We are not to challenge any advantage to ourselves (in the usual way of interest), but to accommodate him freely, without expecting the least requital, or profitable return. Ps. xxxvii. 26; Ecclus. xxix. 1.—*Dr. Warren.*

V. 31.—It is a great advantage to have the whole of our duty collected into such narrow bounds, and presented to us at one view. . . This also is a most convictive rule; every man, that thinks a little, must immediately own that it is highly reasonable. Consult your own consciences, and they will tell you, you need no other adviser; and you are self-condemned, if you violate this precept. It is written on your hearts in illustrious

indelible characters; it shines and sparkles there, like the Urim and Thummim on the breast of Aaron.—*S. Davies.*

V. 32.—For any sincere care of God, and of religion, how few of us are there, that ever entertained so unpleasant a guest in their hearts. We go to Church; and so did they (the Gentiles) to their temples; we pray, and they sacrificed; they washed, and bathed themselves, before they durst approach their Deities; and we come in our best clothes and cleanest linen. But, for any further real service, we mean towards God there, for any inward purity of heart, for any sincere worship of our souls, we are as guiltless, as free from it, we do as much contemn and scorn it, as ever did any heathen.—*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 33.—The Command is a road, in which both heathen, and Christian, and Jew may be travelling. How now shall we know the Christian from the other? By his motive. 2 Cor. v. 14.—*Gurnall.*

V. 34.—If thou givest to receive the like, it is exchange; if to receive more, it is covetousness; if to receive thanks, it is vanity; if to be seen, it is vain glory; if to corrupt, it is bribery; if for example, it is formality; if for compassion, it is charity; if, because thou art commanded, it is obedience. The affection, in doing the work, gives the name to the work done. S. Mark ix. 41.—*F. Quarles.*

V. 35.—When I pray as heartily for my enemies, as I do for my daily bread; when I strive with prayers and tears to make God his friend, who himself will not be mine; when I reckon his felicity among my own

necessities; surely this is such a love, as, in a literal sense, may be said to reach up to Heaven, and which could only come down from Heaven itself. 2 Cor. ii. 15.—*Dr. South.*

Your reward. The publican and the disciple, the heathen and Christian, may agree in the material acts of charity; but that, which formally makes this a Christian grace, is the spring, from which it flows, and the recompense, at which it aims. xiv. 14.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

V. 36.—The goodness, and justice, and mercy, and truth of God are transcendent above the goodness, and justice, and mercy, and truth of men, and of quite a different nature from them.—*Abp. Bramhall.*

Nothing is more reasonable, than that we should be that to one another, which God is to us all.—*Dr. Whichcote.*

V. 37.—In thy zeal against the sins of others, be mindful of thy own exceeding sinfulness; call to remembrance thy great offences, which, though they be unfeignedly repented of, give thee to understand what cause thou hast to be meek, humble, and patient towards all men. . . My own exceeding faultiness engages me, in seeing and hearing the faults and follies of others, to pity them, rather than to rejoice and glory over them; and to cover, or lessen, those faults, rather than to aggravate, or display them. Gal. vi. 1, 2.—*Corbet.*

I am resolved, by the Grace of God, to forgive every body every thing, and myself nothing. 2 Sam. xvi. 9–11. —*Adam.*

V. 38.—If thou be merciful, God hath bound Himself to be merciful to thee again. Lo, is not this an exceeding great thing, that God, which of no right ought to be bound to His creatures, hath yet put it whole in thy own hands to bind Him, against the Day of thy tribulation, to show thee mercy. Ps. xli. 1; Prov. xix. 17.—*W. Tyndale.*

Observe the glowing exuberance of this promise. Not only, *shall it be given you;* but *good measure,* justly proportioned to the exercise of love; *pressed down,* to secure it, as full measure; *shaken together,* as with corn, that it may lie closer in its place; and, as if this were not enough, *running over,* without bounds, *given into your bosom,* so that you shall taste the large indulgence of the blessing. Deut. xv. 7; Eccl. xi. 1; Isa. xxxii. 8; lviii. 7–11.—*W. Bridges.*

One mercy is but a step to another. God's Grace runs in an eternal tenour of love and sweetness; but let duty go hand in hand with dependence on God: as He is not weary in blessing, so be you not weary of well doing.—*Dr. Manton.*

V. 41.—If thy hatred of evil be right, know that it will show itself first at home; as we feel aversions most, when the things are nearest to us.—*Abp. Leighton.*

The humble man has always before his eyes his own defects and imperfections; in others, he considers chiefly their virtues and perfections.—*Rodriguez.*

V. 42.—*The mote.* One of the golden precepts of Pythagoras directs us, "that a friend should not be hated for little faults."—*Dr. Johnson.*

I know there is a difference of sins. Our Saviour tells us there is a *beam*, and there is a *mote;* but withal this I know, that the best way to keep us from sin is to fear and to loathe even the least, as if it were the greatest. If we look through this glass, it will make every mote a beam. Sins, in themselves, are unequal; but, in regard of us, and of our endeavours to avoid them, they are all equal.—*J. Hales.*

A tender conscience is an inestimable blessing; that is, a conscience not only quick to discern what is evil, but instantly to shun it; as the eyelid closes itself against a *mote.* 1 Sam. xxiv. 5.—*Adam.*

V. 45.—The rising of the sun is known by the shining beams; the fire is known by its burning; the life of the body is known by its moving; even so certainly is the presence of God's Spirit known by the shining light of a holy conversation; even so the purging fire of Grace is known by the burning zeal against sin, and a fervent desire to keep God's Commandments; even so certainly the life and liveliness of Faith is known by the good motives of the heart, by the bestirring of all the powers, both of the soul and body, to do whatsoever God wills us to be doing, as soon as we once know He would have us do it. He, that hath this evidence, hath a bulwark against despair, and may dare the devil to his face; he, that hath this, hath the broad seal of Eternal Life, and such a man shall live for ever. S. John xiv. 12.—*J. Mede.*

V. 46.—When we pray for any virtue, we should cultivate the virtue, as well as pray for it. The Form of

your prayers should be the Rule of your life. Every petition to God is a precept to man. Look not therefore on your prayers, as a short method of duty and salvation only, but as a perpetual monition of duty. By what we require of God, we see what He requires of us; and, if you want a system, or collective body of holy precepts, you need no more, but your Prayer Books. S. Mark xi. 25.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

In extemporary prayer, what men most admire God least regardeth; namely, the volubility of the tongue. Herein a Tertullus may equal, yea exceed, S. Paul himself, whose speech was but mean. (Acts xxiv.; 2 Cor. x. 10). Oh, it is the heart, keeping time and tune with the voice, which God listeneth unto. Lam. iii. 41.—*T. Fuller.*

V. 47.—The expression *cometh unto Me*, seems clearly to indicate the *foundation* of faith—the receiving the Lord, by faith, as our Prophet, Priest, and King. Eph. ii. 20, 21; iii. 17; Acts iv. 12; 1 Cor. iii. 11.—*J. Ford.*

V. 48.—*Digged deep.* God is not to be found on the surface. Prov. ii. 4.—*S. Gregory.*

If you would *build* high and firm, dig low in humility, in meekness, and in forgiveness, for the foundation; and your roof shall reach the Heavens. Eph. iii. 8.—*Skelton.*

V. 49.—The soul of religion is the practical part. This *Talkative* is not aware of; he thinks, that hearing and saying will make a good Christian; and thus he deceiveth his own soul. Hearing is but the sowing of the seed; talking is not sufficient to prove that fruit is indeed in

the heart and life: and, let us assure ourselves, that at the Day of doom, men shall be judged, according to their fruits. It will not be then said, Did you believe? but, were you Doers, or talkers only? And, accordingly, they shall be judged. The end of the world is compared to our harvest; and you know men, at harvest, regard nothing, but fruit. S. Matt. xiii. 20; xxv. 35; S. James i. 22; ii. 14.—*Bunyan.*

Great, on many accounts; but chiefly on this, that the fallen house could never be raised from its ruins, never be rebuilt. In Hell, there is no building for Heaven. There is no repentance in the grave. Time is time now. 2 Cor. vi. 2.—*J. Ford.*

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 2.—The Centurion represents the faith of the Gentiles. The same Gentiles are signified by *the servants of the Centurion*, and the daughter of the Canaanitish mother, both of whom Christ healed, without actually going to them. He did not favour them with His corporal Presence; but He saved them by the Word of Faith. Ps. cvii. 20; Acts xiii. 47, 48.—*Isidore of Seville.*

Dear unto him. A habit of benevolence must be contracted and kept alive, as all other habits are, by constant exercise. Now our daily behaviour to our domestics gives us an occasion for an uninterrupted exercise of benevolence; and scarce anything else does. . . There is not a day passes over our heads, but we might contribute something, to lessen the uneasiness, or promote the happiness of those, with whom we have to do; and, by studying to promote their happiness, we mould ourselves into those habits, which are productive of our own, both here and hereafter. Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1.—*J. Seed.*

V. 5.—*A synagogue.* And how much more praiseworthy must he then be, who has built a Church? Acts vii. 46, 47.—*S. Ambrose.*

On his death-bed, George Herbert was reminded by a friend of the re-edifying Layton Church, and his many acts of mercy; to which he made answer, saying, "They

be good works, if they be sprinkled with the Blood of Christ; but not otherwise." Col. iii. 17.—*Life by I. Walton.*

V. 6.—*Jesus went with them.* Consider here, that, if another's faith so much prevails for us, how much more our own; for it was the Centurion's faith, which brought a cure to his servant. Consider, too, the humility of the Lord, who was willing, unasked, to go to the servant of the Centurion; but who declined, when entreated, to go to the son of the Nobleman, as if He shunned his pompous pride. Rom. xii. 16.—*Ludolphus.*

Because he deemed himself unworthy of receiving Christ in his *house,* he is rendered worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of the blessings, enjoyed by Abraham. Eph. iii. 20.—*S. Chrysostom.*

If thou desire the love of God and man, be humble; for the proud heart, as it loves none, but itself, so it is beloved of none, but itself. The voice of humility is God's music; and the silence of humility is God's rhetoric. Humility enforces, where neither virtue nor strength can prevail, nor reason.—*F. Quarles.*

V. 8.—His view of Christ's relation to the spiritual Kingdom, is as original, as it is grand. The Lord appears to him here, as the true Cæsar, and Emperor; the highest over the hierarchy, not of earth, but of Heaven. Dan. vii. 14.—*R. C. Trench.*

To argue with a child, who is *to do, as he is bid,* is to take him out of his sphere, and to put him upon a level

with his father. What can follow, but that the authority of the father must by degrees fall into contempt? And what he loses in authority, the child will gain in conceit, and impertinence; till he will do nothing without a reason, and seldom with; for he thinks his own reason better. Gen. xviii. 19.—*Jones* (of Nayland).

V. 9.—Wonder, as commonly expressed by men, implies something quite strange and wholly unexpected by them, in the object of their wonder. But Christ, who foreknew all things, expressed His approval by His wonder. Because He wondered, He marks out to us some cause for wondering; a lesson such, as we need; for all such emotions in Him were not the signs of any mental excitement, but of a Master, aiming at our instruction.—*S. Augustine.*

The faith of the Apostles shall condemn the unbelieving Jews; the piety of the Centurion, all ungodly magistrates; preaching Paul, all unpreaching prelates; Zacchæus, all usurers; and Lazarus, all repining, impatient, and wicked beggars.—*Abp. Sandys.*

In the case of the Centurion, we have a threefold evidence to character, each tending to pronounce him blessed. Men esteem him, and speak well of him, for his works of public beneficence. God commends the faith, whence all good works proceed. And the third testimony is that, which he unconsciously bears to himself, both in his charity and his humility—his charity toward his sick servant, his humility in the sight of God. Such "favour with God and man," will fall to the lot of every true Christian; and, the more he becomes exalted in the

estimation of others, the more lowly he is in his own eyes; praise not producing pride, but rather a deeper sense of unworthiness. The military profession is signally honoured in the Gospel, which, besides this good man, makes mention of three other Centurions, whom God condescended to employ in His service, proving thereby that not only "in every nation," but in every earthly calling, however seemingly uncongenial to faith and holiness, "He, that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." S. Matt. xxvii. 54; Acts x. 1–4; xxvii. 43.—*J. Ford.*

V. 12.—What a gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! Every fresh circumstance widens the wound, aggravates the calamity; till the description is worked up into the most finished picture of exquisite and inconsolable distress. . . Is not this a fine specimen of the impassioned and picturesque? Who can consider this narrative with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiseration?—*W. Hervey.*

The three sorts of dead, raised by Christ, aptly represent three sorts of sinners. A sinner is dead *in the house,* like Jairus's daughter, when he doth imagine mischief in his mind (viii. 49); *carried out of the gate,* like this young man, when he brings forth ungodliness, in word or deed; stinking *in the grave,* like Lazarus, if he sin habitually without any remorse. . . Now, as there was weeping for the dead damsel in the house, more weeping for this man, carried out of the gate, but most weeping at Lazarus' grave (S. John xi.), so we must be sorry for the beginnings of sin; more sorry for the

proceedings and increase; most sorry, when a man "stands in the way of the wicked, and sits in the seat of the scornful." . . As the Church hath three kinds of bewailing the dead, so the devil and his company three kinds of congratulation. Our adversary rejoiceth a little, when we sin in the house, &c. . . Let us then awake from sleep, and stand up from the dead. Christ in His Word, in His Sacraments, in His judgments, in His preachers, instantly calls unto you daily, "*Young man, arise!*"—"*Damsel, arise!*"—"*Lazarus, arise!*" Wherefore, let us, I beseech you, *sit up, and speak;* that we may comfort the Church, our afflicted mother on earth, and be well accepted of God, our Father in heaven. Ps. vii. 15; Isa. v. 18; Eph. v. 14.—*Dean Boys.*

The manner hath from ancient time been, among Christians, for the Priest to go before the corpse with hymns and psalms of joy (a custom, yet used in some places), and the most considerable friends to bear the body; the chief mourners first, and all the company following the bier, to mind them that they must shortly follow the deceased person in the same path of death. Eccl. xii. 5.—*Dean Comber.*

There is a particular tenderness, due to persons, under any recent affliction; not only that we may not seem to "vex them, whom God hath wounded, and persecute them, whom He hath afflicted;" but because men are more susceptible of resentment, in proportion to the greatness of their distress. . . Their adversity will embitter their spirit, and discolour every object. Handle, then, gently "a wounded mind," as you would do a

wounded body, with all the tenderness as you can. It will not bear too rough a hand. Remember that a good-natured man cannot give pain, without feeling in some measure the pain, he gives. ix. 42.—*J. Seed.*

V. 14.—Perhaps, by touching the bier, He would show us how little dread He had for death and the grave, which are the means of His restoring us to life.—*Calvin.*

V. 15.—*He delivered him, &c.* For the young man had ceased to belong to his mother. 1 Macc. x. 9.—*Bengel.*

Did not this youth naturally belong to his mother, without the need of Christ's new *delivering* him unto her? No; he belonged no more to his mother, after his being raised in this way. The life, he had from his mother, he had lost: a second life he had now received from the mercy and omnipotence of Jesus Christ. Thus we learn from this circumstance the special obligation, which penitents in the Church owe to God; since they have received from Him, a second spiritual life, their first life, given to them in Baptism, having been lost. xv. 32.—*M. Singlin.*

In the *types* of the *general* Resurrection, which were *particular* resuscitations of the dead in this world, the dead were restored to the knowledge of their friends. When Christ raised the son of the widow of Nain, *He delivered him unto his mother;* when Peter raised Tabitha, he called the saints and widows, and presented her alive unto them. So God says to Abraham; "Thou shalt go to thy fathers;" he should know that they were his fathers: so to Moses, "Thou shalt die and be gathered unto thy

people, as Aaron, thy brother, died, and was gathered unto his people." S. Matt. xvii. 3; S. Luke xvi. 23.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 19.—*Art Thou He, &c.* It would appear probable from this inquiry, that our Lord had hitherto abstained from making any distinct public assertion of His being "The Son of God," though certainly He had preached the Gospel to the poor in a more general manner. He had not yet formally presented Himself to the Jewish Church and people, as their expected Messiah (see S. Mark i. 14). If this be so, then the remark of Card. Bonaventura (Life of Christ, chap. xv.) is worthy of attention. "Although our Lord Jesus occasionally preached, and His disciples baptized, yet He did not either Himself, or by His disciples attend to preaching, before the imprisonment of John, as He did afterwards; giving us, in this, an example of amazing humility, in deferring to John, who was so infinitely His inferior in preaching. He did not begin His Ministry with noise and pomp, but humbly and by degrees." To this remark it might be added, that, when our Lord at length made his public Epiphany, as a preacher, He condescended to take the key of His doctrine from the Baptist, and was content to repeat what His forerunner had said before Him, in calling men to repentance. S. Matt. iv. 17; S. Mark i. 15.—*J. Ford.*

In Christ's school, there were three perfections, opposite to three defects in these disciples of John (Conf. S. John iii. 26, 28; S. Matt. ix. 14); examples of humility, against envy; words of wisdom, against ignorance; works of wonder, against incredulity. John therefore sent his

disciples to Christ, that, seeing His humility, their envy might be lessened; that, hearing His wisdom, their ignorance might be rectified; that, wondering at His works, their incredulity might be confounded.—*Dean Boys.*

V. 22.—He doth neither affirm nor deny, but would rather have His works testify of Him, than that He would testify of Himself. S: John v. 31, 32.—*Bede.*

Malice itself cannot find reason to suspect a collusion, when prophecies and miracles thus unite their testimony, and proclaim Jesus to be the Messiah.—*Bp. Horne.*

By six works of mercy Christ wrought miracles upon the body, and by those six also doth He work miracles upon the soul. Blindness is ignorance and error; lameness is infirmity and waywardness of the will; leprosy is concupiscence of the flesh; deafness is obduration of the heart; the separation of grace from the soul is death; poverty is the defect, or want, of the knowledge of God, the power to receive the Gospel.—*Sutton.*

V. 23.—To Christ's chain of the eight Evangelical Beatitudes, we may string on these two, like precious pearls; "*Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me;*" and, "It is more *Blessed* to give, than to receive." Acts xx. 35.—*J. Ford.*

V. 24.—*A reed shaken with the wind.* As the forerunner designed to remove all doubt from the minds of his disciples, respecting Christ; so did the Saviour, in His turn, design the same end, respecting John. He

commended him in divers ways to the multitude, who knew not the true reasons of his question, and therefore might have imputed to him some improper motive; whereby their faith in his previous testimony would have been shaken. For, hearing John's question, they might have been induced to regard him, unstedfast in his faith, and self-indulgent in his life; when free, openly affirming the truth of Christ; but, afterwards, when imprisoned, as sinking under adversity and seeming to doubt. This unstedfastness then *(A reed, &c.,)* relates to doubts in his mind; and this self-indulgence *(A man clothed, &c.)* to the enticements of pleasure; from both these imputations the Lord defends him, and commends him for the opposite virtues. He commends him, moreover, when his disciples were gone away; in their absence, rather than their presence; in order that His praise might evidently speak the language of truth, rather than savour of any favouritism, or of flattery.—*Ludolphus.*

V. 25.—A man is no greater, than what he is in the eye of God; and the estimation, which God hath of us, is not for being born in a *palace,* but for being righteous and just. What an error is it then to value ourselves more for our human birth, by which we are made sinners, than for our Divine birth, by which we are made just? *Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 28.—The clearness of the Old Testament it was but brightness of the *countenance;* the face of Moses did only shine in his revelations; the clearness of the New Testament is brightness of the *feet;* their very feet are glorious, that preach the Gospel. The shining of the Old

Testament was brightness in the veil, as S. Paul observes; the very clearness of that was hidden, and veiled over with much obscurity. Christ's shining in the New Testament, it is far more evident; it is the veil in brightness; His very garments are clear and glorious, as the Sun. (ix. 29). The clear preaching of Christ made John the Baptist greater, than the Prophets; the meanest of our calling greater, than John the Baptist. Rom. x. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 7–18; 2 Tim. i. 10.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

The peculiar dignity of the Christian Minister consists in this; that he is the Representative of Christ; for, as Christ is evidently above all other messengers from God, he, who stands in His stead, must be superior, beyond compare, to all ministers of religion, whether prophets, priests, law-givers, judges, or kings, whom Almighty God ever commissioned. Moses, Aaron, Samuel, and David, were shadows of the Saviour; but the Minister of the Gospel is His present substitute. As a type, or prophecy of grace, is less, than a pledge and means; as a Jewish sacrifice is less, than a Gospel Sacrament; so are Moses and Elias less by office, than the Representatives of Christ, S. Matt. x. 40; S. John xx. 21–23; 1 Cor. iv. 1; 2 Cor. v. 20; Gal. iv. 14.—*J. H. Newman.*

V. 30.—*The counsel of God.* This is what S. Paul terms, "the *Will* of God, even our Sanctification." These two emphatic expressions forcibly denote the necessity and the blessedness of that "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;" and they will rise up, as witnesses, at the last Day against all, who *reject this*

counsel of the Lord, all, who resist *His Will* concerning them. Ps. i. 1.—*J. Ford.*

V. 32.—*We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced.* What are allowable amusements? Such recreations, and such alone, as may, in some degree, assist our faculties of mind and body to perform that great work, for which they were united, and placed in this probationary world. No amusements, therefore, are allowable, which produce weariness of body, or lassitude of mind; which indispose us for serious thought and feeling; which keep us cold and indifferent, respecting wisdom and virtue; which break down the barriers between us, and the vice and follies of the world; or, which leave behind them a disrelish for the close inspection of our hearts, and for devotional intercourse with our God. —*Bp. Jebb.*

V. 34.—*Eating and drinking.* The Country Parson knows that nature will not bear everlasting droopings, and that pleasantness of disposition is a great key to do good; not only because all men shun the company of perpetual severity, but also, for that, when they are in company, instructions, seasoned with pleasantness, both enter sooner, and root deeper. Wherefore, he condescends to human frailties, both in himself and others; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, *according to the pulse of the hearer.*—*G. Herbert.*

Let it ever be remembered, that he, who has really found the mean between the two extremes will, and must, be reckoned enthusiastic by those, who are in the extreme

of coldness. You can easily conceive, that, when any one stands in a middle point between two others, who are, with respect to him, strictly equidistant, he must, from the inevitable laws of perspective, appear to both to be, not in the middle, but comparatively near the opposite party. He therefore must make up his mind to be censured on both sides; by the enthusiastic, as cold; by those, who are cold, as enthusiastic. 2 Cor. v. 13.—*Alexander Knox.*

V. 35.—Although the wisest contrivances of Heaven for the good of mankind are liable to the unjust cavils and exceptions of unreasonable men, yet there is enough to satisfy any teachable and ingenuous minds, concerning the wisdom of them.—*Bp. Stillingfleet.*

V. 36.—Examine, when you mix with the world, if duty calls you, if it is for the good of men, and the glory of God, if it is His work, you are going to do? Look up, and you will find it was so with your Master. If He manifested Himself in a village of Jewry, it was to do the work of His Father; if at a marriage, it was to show His power, and command authority to His doctrine; if at the house of a publican, it was to save a child of Abraham; if at Jerusalem on the feast-day, it was to purge the temple. Ecclus. vii. 36.—*Massillon.*

It is well, if our visit to a worldly family does not prove a blank, or a blot.—*Abp. Leighton.*

The tares have the privilege of the field, as well as the wheat, and the bad fish of the net, as well as the good. To communicate with *sin* is sin; but to communicate

with the *sinner* in that, which is not sin, can be none. S. Matt. xiii.—*Palmer.*

V. 37.—How is this? That a woman unknown, rather known too well, laden with sorrows, full of tears, clamorous through her grief, the porter's notice evaded, none observing her entrance, the very Master unconscious of it, should make her way through the passages of the house, thread the groups of the domestic servants, penetrate into the inner feasting room, and convert a house of convivial mirth into one of groans and lamentation? My brethren, she came uninvited, and yet commanded. He, who ordained her absolution by His own Divine sentence, caused her in this manner to take her place in His presence. Phil. iii. 12.—*Peter Chrysologus.*

Earth has nothing equal to the wretchedness of her, whom the Scripture terms the "strange," the "evil" woman. The loss of youthful innocence, the wreck of early hope, the abandonment of holy principles, the thoughts, and words, and deeds of shame, inward remorse racking the heart, and outward disease undermining the frame, these are the *beginnings of sorrow;* but *the end* is not yet.—*Bp. Coleridge.*

V. 38.—*Feet.* Much importance is to be attached by the careful reader to the fact, that this woman washed the *feet* of our Saviour: for this circumstance identifies her, it would appear, with Mary the sister of Lazarus (S. John xi. 2); who is again brought before our notice, as performing a like office of dutiful service to her

Redeemer, shortly before His sufferings (S. John xii. 3). Distinct from her is the woman, who in the house of Simon the leper poured ointment upon the *head* of our Lord, but did not anoint His *feet*, as Mary did. Her act is recorded by S. Matthew (xxvi. 6), and S. Mark (xiv. 3), while S. Luke and S. John commemorate the above mentioned acts of Mary; the first, done in the depth of her repentance; the last, in the growing confidence of her justification and pardon. S. Augustine and S. Chrysostom agree in the opinion, that there were only *two* different women, who thus testified their devout feelings towards our Lord; and the supposition that Mary Magdalene was one of these rests on no better ground, than a vague tradition.—*J. Ford.*

In that she stood *behind Him*, her humility and devotion are seen; in that she *washed His feet with her tears*, we trace her true penitence and contrition. And, as she concealed her tears, as she wiped them away with the hairs of her head, she gives proof that she is not one of those, who "do their works to be seen of men." . . When I think of her repentance, I am more disposed to weep, than to speak. What heart so hard, as to find no force in these tears, as not to be melted into repentance by them? Mark, how intense her anguish, when she was not ashamed to weep in the midst of a feast. For, knowing the spots of her guilt, she hastened to the laver of mercy; she blushed not at the sight of the guests; for, since she so deeply blushed at herself within herself, she deemed that nothing from without could cause her shame. —*S. Gregory.*

Tears help to wash away the sins, which the penitent is ashamed to confess, while sighs and acts of bashfulness prepare for pardon. Tears express our misdeeds without the shock of their exposure; tears acknowledge our crimes, without doing violence to our feeling of shame.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 42.—No man can duly prize the blessings of Heaven, but he, who acknowledges that he might justly have been denied them; nor can any be sufficiently thankful for them, except it be confessed that He owed man nothing, who bestowed them.—*Bp. Pearson.*

S. John, discoursing of this love of God, which is the greatest duty of a Christian, takes notice of no other motive of it, than our gratitude, our indispensable obligation to be grateful to so good a friend. "We love Him," he says, "because He first loved us." He does not say, because God is infinitely perfect in Himself, but because He has been infinitely good and kind to *us*. . . The disciple, "whom Jesus loved," who by experience knew that no impression sinks deeper in a generous heart than the endearing obligation of returning love for love, pleads nothing else, but gratitude, for the fulfilling of this great Commandment. "We love God, because He first loved us." Isa. i. 1–4.—*A Contrite Heart.*

V. 44.—*He turned, &c.* What is this? *He turned, &c.* This intimates what He will, on His return, say to Simon, to all Pharisees, to all, who reject Him, to all the Jews, "*I entered thy house, &c.*" And when will He declare this? When He shall come "in the glory of His

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"move on those waters," and breathes life and salvation into them; and He, who is the Unction, pours oil into those wounds of the spirit; and we are never nearer heaven, than when we are thus prostrate in the lowest dust; and when our "belly cleaveth unto the ground," in humble penitence, then we are at the very throne of Grace. —*Dr. Allestry.*

Etiam in mensâ, even at the social board, the Saviour used the Keys. S. Matt. xvi. 19. Thus can even a feast be made the occasion of leading those into the Kingdom of God, who are now far from it. Here we see Jesus holding kind and familiar intercourse with people of the humblest rank. Hereby they came in contact with virtues, that win the heart; namely, with undefiled innocence, gracious goodness, and benevolent earnestness to help others in the right way. Let us study to imitate Christ in all this. 2 Cor. x. 1.—*Bengel.*

V. 48.—*Thy sins are forgiven thee.* A great comfort, when I am down; but no emboldening to fall down. xxii. 61.—*Bp. Babington.*

V. 50.—Here is an introduction to S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, an early and beautiful exemplification of the means, on our part, whereby we are justified—*Faith working by Love*, and as opposed to Circumcision, and those deeds of the Law, by which this Pharisee, who "despised others," hoped to establish his own righteousness. Faith is the mother and nurse of love. "A loving heart to keep God's Commandments," is the offspring of faith; and the life of the parent is bound up with the life of the child (Gen.

xliv. 30); for without love there can be no good works, and without these faith is dead. "Seest thou," in the case of this woman, "how faith wrought with her works, and by works was her faith made perfect?" and it was said unto her, *Go in peace*. Rom. iii. iv. v.; Gal. v. 6; S. James ii.; 1. Cor. xiii.—*J. Ford.*

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 4.—We view moral truths through the veil of allegories and parables, like so many pictures through a transparent glass, which covers, but does not hide, them. Some of the most important spiritual sentiments are made easy to us by the most familiar sensible images. Thus does the truth, like the great Author of it, stand confessed in a visible shape; receive, as it were, a body; and become, if I may use the expression, Incarnate. Prov. xxv. 11.—*J. Seed.*

V. 8.—As in the bad ground there were three different kinds—the wayside, the stony, and the ground with thorns—so a threefold distinction is found in the good ground; "some, thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred." Rom. xii. 2.—*S. Jerome.*

V. 9.—That Church is happy, where order is kept up, and the abilities of the Ministers command a reverend submission from the hearers; and where all are in Christ's school, in the distinct ranks of teachers and learners: for, in a learning way, men are ready to receive the truth; but, in a disputing way, they come armed against it with prejudice and animosity. 1 Cor. xiv. 16; Col. ii. 5; Gal. vi. 6.—*R. Baxter.*

V. 10.—To him, who loves the Word of God, will the Grace be given of understanding that, which he loves. Ps. cxix. 97–104; ii. Thess. ii. 10.—*Bede.*

The Apostles, who sat continually at the feet of Christ, when the mysteries of faith are mentioned, are told immediately, *To you it is given to know;* but, when they inquire concerning things, which are not necessary for them to understand, they are told, "It is not for you to know" (Acts i. 17). . . Our age is perishing from too much knowledge. . . We all desire to know everything; and, lest anything should escape us, we foolishly rush and attempt to go headlong into the most secret counsels of God. 1 Sam. vi. 19.—*Bp. Hall.*

Seeing they might see, &c. In general, levity, careless ness, passion, and prejudice do hinder us from being rightly informed, with respect to common things; and they may, in like manner, and perhaps in some farther providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects; they may hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen, when it is. The Scripture does declare, that "Every one shall not understand." And it makes no difference by what providential conduct this comes to pass; whether the evidence of Christianity was, originally and with design, put and left so, as that those, who are desirous of evading moral obligations, should not see it; and that honest minded persons (Ver. 15) should; or, whether it comes to pass by any other means. Dan. xii. 10; Isa. xxix. 13, 14; S. Matt. vi. 23; xi. 25; S. John iii. 19; v. 44; 1 Cor. ii. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 13. Grotius saw so strongly the thing, intended in these and other passages of Scripture of the like sense, as to say, that the proof, given us of Christianity, was less than it might have been, for this very purpose; "That

the Gospel might prove a sort of Lydian stone; a test, to discover dispositions, capable of being healed."—*Bp. Butler.*

V. 13.—*Receive the Word with joy.* Beloved, hypocrisy is spun of a fine thread, and is not easily discernible, without very diligent examination. And things are not to be measured by the outward show, or by the lump and bulk, but by an exacter rule, whether they be true, or not. Dost thou *hear the Word with joy?* Dost thou bewail thy sins with tears? Dost thou avoid gross sins with care? Dost thou oppose against common corruptions with zeal? These are indeed comfortable signs, but no infallible evidences of Grace. . . *Integrity* and *constancy* are two marks, by which a man may come to know the sanctification of his heart, and the sincerity of these affections. . . The hypocrite *receives the Word with joy,* so far, as it tickleth his ear with choiceness of phrase, and variety of elocution; so far, as it fitteth with his humour, and keepeth fair, and far off, from meddling with his bosom sin; but he is not equally delighted with every part, and with every point, of God's word and truth. If the right string be touched, if his sweet darling sin be stirred, that is harsh to him; he findeth no music in that. . . Then are graces true, when they are habitual, and constant, and equal to themselves. S. Mark vi. 20; Rom. ii. 7.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

I submit, with deference, whether the case of the *stony-ground hearer* does not also describe the man, who substitutes feelings in religion for principles. Judging of his state merely by the evidence of a pleasurable excite-

ment, he fancies himself to be "something, when he is nothing;" having no internal strength, such as arises from sound and solid principles of repentance and faith, he is soon overcome, on the assault of some special and severe temptation. All his confident boasting is now silenced; all his joyous profession, which shone in the sunshine of prosperity, is obscured in darkness. S. John v. 35, seems exactly to illustrate this case. But a man may go through all this, without positive insincerity, without being a hypocrite.—*J. Ford.*

V. 14.—It is remarkable that our Saviour here places *riches* in the midst, between *cares* and *pleasures;* for cares generally precede the gaining of riches, and, when gained, they draw men into pleasures and indulgences. —*Dr. Dodd.*

Choked. Vice is the natural product of the soil; the more uncultivated the mind is, the more it is over-run with it: but virtue is the slow laborious result of repeated self-denials, hardships, and difficulties. Prov. xxiv. 30.—*J. Seed.*

V. 15.—*Immediately,* on the first hearing, without any touch of conscience, without any thorough humiliation going before, *they receive the Word with joy.* But the good ground brings forth, as other of her fruits, so this of joy (Gal. v. 22), with *patience,* or, as the Greek word may bear, in expectation, or tarriance; namely for the fit season. The good ground doth rather restrain, and keep itself in; it retains the seed within, till the just time of bringing forth be come. Wherefore, this overhastiness,

that is in our Temporary's joy, and so also other of his graces, giveth us just cause to suspect them, as deceitful, and to fear in them the truth of the common proverb, "Soon ripe soon rotten." Ps. lxxviii. 10.—*Dyke.*

Grace no more goes at a bound, than does nature. 2 S. Pet. iii. 18.—*R. Baxter.*

Each of these several dangers (the obstacles to our receiving the Word), is capable of its proper remedy. The foot-path may be stopped, while the seed is growing: and cannot we, for one day at least in seven, allow some time from the conversation of the world to serious thoughts and to prayer to God, that His Word may not be preached to us in vain? The birds may with some little trouble be chased away; and if with hearty resolution we resist the devil, God's Word has taught us, that he will, in like manner, flee from us. The stony and shallow soil may be enriched and deepened by mixing it with better mould: and the irresolute Christian, who delights in the company of pious men and pious books, will find his heart grow daily stronger, and better fitted to bear fruit to ripeness. The thorns and thistles may, one by one, be completely cleared away; and he, who will not spare any single sin, will purify at length his heart, even as the heart of Jesus Christ was pure.—*Bp. Heber.*

I will ask the Heavenly Husbandman to make my heart, like this good soil. For, though it be like the hard stone, yet "God is able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;" and, though it be filled with thorns and briars, yet, under the influence of Divine

grace, this waste land of mine may be made a garden of joy.—*Haeftenus.*

V. 16.—He, typically, sets forth the boldness of preaching; that no one, through fear of fleshly ills, should conceal the light of knowledge. For under the names of *vessel* and *bed*, He represents the flesh; but, under that of *lantern*, the Word, which whosoever keeps hid, through fear of the troubles of the flesh, sets the flesh itself before the manifestation of the truth; and he, who fears to preach the Word, as it were, covers it. But he places a candle upon the candlestick, who so submits his body to the service of God, that the preaching of the truth stands highest in his estimation, the service of the body lowest.—*S. Augustine.*

There is an old custom of saying, when light is brought in, "God send us the light of Heaven!" And the Parson likes this very well: neither is he afraid of praising, or praying to God, at all times, but is rather glad of catching opportunities to do them. Ps. xliii. 3.—*G. Herbert.*

V. 18.—God's measure is not like the measure of flesh and blood. The measure of flesh and blood is this: an empty vessel is receptive, but a full one can take in no more: but God's measure is this; the full vessel is receptive of more, but the empty vessel receives nothing. xix. 24–26.—*Dr. Lightfoot.*

So then, this is our act of recognition. We acknowledge God, and God only, to do all; but we do not so make Him Sovereign alone, as that we leave His presence naked and empty; nor so make Him King alone, as that

we depopulate His country, and leave Him without subjects; nor so leave all to Grace, as that the natural faculties of man do not become the servants and instruments of that Grace. Let all, that we all seek, be—who may glorify God most. And we shall agree in this; that, as the Pelagian wounds the glory of God deeply, in making natural faculties joint-commissioners with Grace, so do they diminish the glory of God too, if any deny natural faculties to be the subordinate servants and instruments of Grace: for, as Grace could not work upon man to Salvation, if man had not a faculty of will, to work upon, because, without that will, man were not man; so is this Salvation wrought in the will, by conforming this will of man to the Will of God—not by extinguishing the will itself, by any force or constraint, that God imprints in it by His Grace. God saves no man without, or against, his will.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 21.—S. Matthew and S. Mark agree, in narrating this affecting incident in our Lord's Ministry, as taking place before the delivery of the Parable of the Sower; but S. Luke places it after. The difference of expressions, severally used by them, seems to harmonize with this difference in the time. S. Matthew and S. Mark speak generally of *Doing the Will of God;* but S. Luke, as reverting to the Parable, and designing to give a full completion to it, records the language of the Saviour thus, "My mother and My brethren are they, which *Hear the word of God, and Do it;* the very description just given of "the good ground," the men of "an honest and good heart." Observe, our Lord here exemplified beforehand the rule, He gave to His disciples. xviii. 29.—*J. Ford.*

We see His company (S. Luke ii. 16), His father and mother, Joseph and Mary—a "virgin" and a "just man" (S. Matt. i. 19). With the pure and just He loves to be; with such He will be found. He, that hath a pure heart to God, and a just hand to man, shall have His company; such, as are so, *Do the will of God;* and they, that do so, are His parent, and kindred, and fit company for Him to be in. Ps. xv.—*W. Austin.*

V. 22.—Christ compareth His Church to the weakest things, that be. Sometimes He calls it a Vine, which, unless it be evermore propped, and borne up, and looked unto, and pruned, of itself is not able to stand, but falleth to the ground and groweth wild; sometimes He likeneth it to a flock of Sheep, which, without attendance, is ready to take infinite maladies; sometimes to *a Ship,* which, if it be not well provided on every side, if it be destitute of light, of sun, of stars, is in danger of the rock, and winds, and surges of the sea; sometimes to the Moon, which hath no light but from the Sun. 2 Cor. iv. 7.—*Bp. Jewel.*

Nor shall we in any wise do wrong to the literal truth of this, or any other of Christ's miracles, by recognizing the character at once symbolic and prophetic, which no doubt many of them bear, and this among the number. As the kernel of the old humanity, Noah and his family, was once contained in the ark, which was tossed upon the waves of the deluge; so the kernel of the new humanity, of the new creation, Christ and His Apostles, in the little ship.—*R. C. Trench.*

V. 23.—Oh! the infelicity of the human race! This world is full of sorrow, and yet we love it: only suppose it were full of joy, how should we love it then! A stormy tempestuous world is loved. What, if it were calm and tranquil?—*S. Augustine.*

Our Lord waits for the patient continuance of the good, and for the repentance of the wicked; His *sleep* is the Divine acquiescence in our tribulations, and He is roused from it by the prayers of the righteous. 2 S. Pet. iii. 9, 12.—*Origen.*

V. 24.—*There was a calm.* Give me a man, that, after many secret bickerings and hard conflicts in his heart, upon a serious penitence, and sense of reconciliation with his God, hath attained to a quiet heart, walking conscionably and closely with that Majesty, with which he is atoned (reconciled). I shall bless and emulate him, as a meet subject of true joy; for, spiritually, there never is a perfect calm, but after a tempest. The wind, and earthquake, and fire, make way for the soft voice. 2 Cor. vii. 11–13.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 25.—*Where is your faith?* A child of God may be tossed, by reason of corruption and temptation in a troublesome sea: but that ship shall never be shipwrecked, where Christ is the pilot, the Scripture the compass, the promises the tacklings, hope the anchor, *faith* the cable, the Holy Ghost the wind, and holy affections the sails, which are filled thus with the gales of the Spirit. Isa. liv. 11.—*Chr. Love.*

V. 27.—The nearer any being comes to God, who is that

infinite fulness, that "fills all in all," the more vast, and large, and unbounded, that being is; as the further it slides from Him, the more it is straitened and confined: as Plato hath long since concluded, concerning the condition of sensual men, that they "live, like a shell-fish," and can never move up and down, but in their own prison, which they ever carry about with them. Were I to define sin, I would call it the sinking of a man's soul from God into a sensual selfishness. All the freedom, that wicked men have, is but (like that of banished men) to wander up and down in the wilderness of this world, from one den, or cave, to another. xi. 24; xv. 16.—*John Smith.*

V. 28.—It was not a free willing confession, but extorted from them by necessity; from fear of His presence they said, *What have I to do with Thee?* There is nothing in common between Thee and us; Thou art God, we are devils; Thou art lowly, we are proud; Thou camest to save, we to kill. 2 Cor. vi. 1.—*S. Hilary.*

V. 30.—*What is thy name?* Our Lord needed not the information for Himself; but "For us it is written." As He raised the furious perilous storm to magnify the putting forth of His power in saving His disciples, so He exposes to our view, by means of this question, all the intensity of the demoniacal possession, the *Legion*, the six thousand "strong men armed, who kept their house." He then exhibits the exceeding strength of the Man, "Stronger than they," who, at His word only, could cast them all out, and set the captive at liberty. In both cases how complete is the result; how marked the

testimony borne to His Divine power! "What manner of man is this; for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" *The man out of whom the devils were departed, published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.* (Compare the question, "Who touched Me?" at ver. 45.) Rom. iii. 10–27.—*J. Ford.*

A sinner, every sinner, is in every mortal sin, not only guilty of one crime, but of a *Legion* of crimes; an ungrateful villain, who betrays his Benefactor; a presumptuous slave, who abuses his Deliverer; a proud servant, who despises his Master; an insolent criminal, who offends before his Judge's face. All these are crimes we have a horror of, where we observe them only betwixt fellow creatures, betwixt man and man. All these are infinitely greater betwixt man and God; and every mortal sin includes the utmost aggravation of them all.—*A Contrite Heart.*

V. 32.—God's providence orders and directs sin and wickedness to such objects, as He thinks fit. It is a true saying of Hugo de Sancto Victore, "God never infuses any corruption or wickedness into the wills of men, but only gives order and direction to their wicked actions." All the preparations and contrivances of sin are from the depraved hearts of men; the ordering of them to particular and suitable objects from the good providence of God. We know that God's providence extended itself to the very *swine,* and would not suffer Satan to enter into them, without His particular warrant; and, sure then, we need not doubt, but that this providence is more

eminently concerned about man, whom He was pleased to make "after His own Image." Job ii. 6; Isa. x. 5–8. —*March.*

V. 35.—What a shameful and unworthy thing it is for so noble and Divine a creature, as the soul of man, to be sunk and immersed in brutish and sensual lusts, and so to lose the relish of solid and spiritual pleasures; that the beast should be fed and pampered; that the man and the Christian be starved in us. S. James iii. 15; v. 5.—*Scougal.*

V. 37.—The senate of Hell had no project to keep out religion, like to this—to make religion thwart an interest. Rather no Christianity, than lose an earthly satisfaction by it. Rather have the *swine*, than Christ Himself.—*Dr. Allestry.*

V. 39.—*Return to thine house, &c.* Warm religious *feelings* are given us, to be *used*, as incitements to deeds of love, mercy, truth, meekness, holiness. . . "Follow on to know the Lord," and to secure His favour, by *acting* upon these impulses; nor be surprised, though you obey them, that they die away: they have done their office; and, if they die, it is but as seed changes into the herb, which bears that fruit, which is far better. They must die. Perhaps you will have to labour in darkness afterwards; out of your Saviour's sight, in the home of your own thoughts, surrounded by sights of this world, and showing forth His praise among those, that are cold-hearted. Still, be quite sure that resolute consistent obedience, though unattended with high transport and

warm emotion, is far more acceptable to Him, than all those passionate longings to live in His sight, which look more like religion to the uninstructed. Acts viii. 8, 39; xiii. 52.—*J. H. Newman.*

The truth of Conversion will evidence itself in the ordering and reforming of our personal calling. Religion, it is not a matter merely of public and common profession, dwells not in Churches and Temples only, but it will enter into *thine house,* bid itself home to thee, as Christ to Zacchæus (xix. 5), have access and sway to all thy employments. The Law of God was not to be wrote on the doors of the Temple, but upon the posts of thine own doors; and thou to meditate upon it, not only going to the Church, but in thy field, in thine house, with thy children, in all the turnings of thy life and calling. iii. 10–15.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 41.—*He fell down.* Dost thou think, O man, that God will hear that prayer, which thou dost not hear thyself? Will God regard that prayer, that thou dost not regard? Will God grant thy request, when thou dost not know, what thou askest; because of that indisposedness and indistraction, that lies upon thy spirit? 1 S. Pet. iv. 7.—*Chr. Love.*

V. 42.—The young may die shortly; but the aged cannot live long: green fruit may be plucked off, or shaken down; but the ripe will fall of itself.—*Palmer.*

V. 44.—*Touched—immediately.* As if any should bring his eyes to a shining light, or should put stubble to the fire, the effect would immediately take place; the

eye would see; the stubble would burn;—so she, bringing faith to Him, that was able to heal, immediately obtained the health and blessing desired. She *touched* Christ, first, in mind; afterwards, in body.—*Theophylact.*

V. 45.—Multitudes of Christians, as it were, *press* upon Jesus Christ in hearing His Word, receiving His Sacraments, and performing the outward parts of religion; but few *touch* Him by a lively faith, by a true Christian life, by the prayer of charity, and by the meditation, love, and imitation of His Mysteries.—*Quesnel.*

V. 47.—The experienced Christian has too solid a view of the Mercy of God, in Christ, not to rejoice; but he has too exalted views of the Holiness of God, not to "rejoice with trembling." Ps. ci. 1.—*M. Arnaud.*

Is not our obligation to fear consistent with our greater motives, greater obligations, to hope? It is one of the most dangerous mistakes, we are subject to. We seem to fancy, that our fear destroys our hope, and that we cannot hope, unless we cease to fear. We take these two affections of the mind for mortal enemies, because their humours are so opposite. But, as that friendship is the greatest, which no difference of humour can divide, so, if we examine well the matter, we shall find that fear and hope are such inseparable friends, they cannot possibly subsist without each other's company: the separation of the one is certainly the death and ruin of the other. Fear, without hope, degenerates into despair; hope, without fear, is no longer hope, but dangerous presumption. If now and then our minds are troubled and

perplexed with fear, we must not, therefore, presently conclude, that we have lost our hope: no, no; we should have lost it, if we did not fear. If the consideration of God's Justice make a sinner tremble, he may lawfully desire to be delivered from the uneasiness, the pain, and the anxiety, which are the troublesome companions of his fear; but, as for fear itself, it is an essential duty of a Christian, which cannot on any terms admit of a dispensation. If the unsearcheable designs and secrets of God's Providence are apt to fill our souls with apprehensions and fears, this only helps us to perform the one half of our duty, without prejudicing the performance of the other: for, the more we fear His Justice, so much the more we hasten to the shelter of His Mercy. Ps. xxxiii. 18; xxxiv. 7, 8; cxlvii. 11.—*A Contrite Heart.*

V. 50.—If we felt nothing but fears, they might make us despair; if nothing but mercies, they might make us secure. If the whole year were summer, the sap of the earth would be exhausted; if the whole were winter, it would be quite buried. The hammer breaks metal, and the fire melts it; and then you may cast it into any shape. Judgments break, mercies melt; and then the soul is fit to be cast into God's mould. v. 7; Ps. ci. 1.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 52.—As we have but imperfect notions of the relations and differences between life and death, our Saviour, when He was about to raise a maid to life, said to those, who were present, *The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.* He did not say, "She is dead, and I will raise her to life;" but, "She is asleep:" whence it was to be inferred,

that she would awake. They, who were not skilled in the Divine language of signs and figures, *laughed Him to scorn;* as if He had spoken in ignorance, what was expressed with consummate truth and wisdom: for the substitution of *sleep* for *death*, when we have it upon such great authority, has the force of a whole sermon in a single word, and is a seed, from whence a Tree of Life may be unfolded.—*W. Jones.*

V. 55.—T. Aquinas in his Aurea Catena notes three acts of the *Hæmorrhousa;* "She *believed;* she *spake;* she *touched,*" because, as he observes, by these three things—faith, confession of the mouth, and good works—Salvation is obtained. So we may remark three acts in the daughter of Jairus; for she *arose*, she *walked*, she *ate* (Conf. S. Matt. S. Mark, S. Luke), and may draw our inference, that Salvation consists of a new life, progress in holiness, and Sacramental grace.—*J. Ford.*

V. 56.—Self-applauding, self-seeking, in matter of praise and honour before men, I strive against. I desire to be as sincere to another's reputation, as to my own. I would not value others by their regard to me, but by their true worth. I would be contented to be little in the eyes of others. . . I labour to be unbottomed of self, to die to self-advancement, to self-glorying, and to all selfish joys, and to live wholly in and to God, and to have Self swallowed up in the Love of Him. Gal. vi. 14, 15, 16.—*Corbet.*

The signs of the Divine power and goodness, as displayed in these three miracles, are so bright and effulgent,

as to force themselves on our admiring attention; the signs of the Divine humility and lowliness of heart are also here; but partially concealed: for it belongs to humility to draw a veil over itself. Verse 38. Jesus *sent him away;* as to have retained him in His company might have savoured of ostentation. Verse 39. *Show how great things* God *hath done unto thee.* He referred all to His Father's glory. Verse 48. *Thy faith* (not My power) *hath made thee whole.* Verse 52. *She is not dead, but sleepeth:* a person, bent on self-display, would have rather dwelt on the fact of her being surely dead. Verse 54. *He put them all out,* as one, not desirous of many spectators, but only of securing a sufficient evidence, the "two or three witnesses," (the father and mother; or Peter, James, and John. S. Matt. xviii. 16). Verse 56. *He charged them that they should tell no man what was done;* "showing, that He is the giver of good things, but not covetous of glory; and that He gives the whole, receiving nothing." In His Humility there is "the hiding of His Power." S. Matt. vi. 1–4.—*J. Ford.*

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 1.—Our Lord Himself and the Twelve, and then, again, the Seventy, all three Orders, as it were, of the Ministry, combined together in one these two blessed works of *healing* the diseases, both of body and soul. . . There can be no teaching of the Gospel, no effectual saving way of edifying the souls of men, unless it be accompanied with compassionate mercy and charity. . . Christ has told us, that the great proof of a true Prophet, whom we are to follow, will be that of bearing fruit, that is, the fruits of mercy; for, though Satan can "transform himself into an Angel of light," yet consistent and humble works of loving-kindness he cannot counterfeit. S. Matt. vii. 16; Eph. iv. 15; 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.—*Plain Sermons.*

I do not remember, that in any history, for matter of fact, nor in the framing and institution of any State, for matter of law, there hath ever been such a law, or such a practice, as that of *preaching;* which was only an Ordinance of God Himself, for God's own people. 1 Cor. i. 21.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 2.—To *preach* the pure and undefiled Word of God, drawn from the fountain-head, and unmixed with glosses and traditions of men, must be the earnest endeavour of our lives, and the subject of our most frequent prayers. To set before the eyes of our people the Saviour of mankind, in all the varied acts of His Ministry; to refer all

our hopes of pardon to His Death, and all our hopes of heaven to His Resurrection; all the efficacy of our prayers to His Intercession; all our comfort in sorrow, our strength under temptation, and our truth in doctrine, to the gift of His Holy Spirit—this will be the tone of Christian preaching, which will touch the hearts of our hearers, and thereby correct their lives. No reasoned morality, or human philosophy, or example of men, can avail without this; nor even with it, unless they bow the knee before the One Name, which is "Above every name," and consent to be the handmaids, and not the rivals, of the Gospel. 1 Cor. i. 17, 30; 2 Cor. v. 18–21.—*Bp. Selwyn.*

V. 3.—*Two coats.* This may seem rather severe, that He should send them out, in winter-time, half-naked; but, 1. This well enough became the Providence, which He was determined to exert towards them in a more peculiar manner, S. Luke xxii. 35, and to the charge of which He would commit them. Of such a kind and nature was His Providence in preserving them, as was shown towards the Israelites in the wilderness; Deut. xxix. 5. 2. This suited well enough with the mean and low estate of that kingdom of heaven, and of the Messiah, which the Apostles were to preach. . . so that the Jews might learn to believe in the Messiah, when they should observe Him capable so wondrously to protect His messengers, though surrounded with such numberless inconveniences. Phil. i. 12.—*Dr. Lightfoot.*

V. 5.—*Whosoever shall not receive you, &c.* Despise not, good brethren, despise not to hear God's Word

declared. As you tender your own souls, be diligent to come to Sermons; for that is the ordinary place, where men's hearts be moved and God's secrets be revealed. For, be the preacher never so weak, yet is the Word of God as mighty, and as puissant, as ever it was. If thou hear God's Word, spoken by a weak man, an ignorant man, a sinner, as thou thyself art, and yet will believe it, and hear it with reverence, it is able to open thine eyes, and to reveal to thee the high mysteries of thy Salvation. Isa. lv. 10, 11.—*Bp. Jewel.*

Be not much in that company, that will neither give, nor take, any good.—*Gurnall.*

V. 7.—No man ever offended his own conscience, but, first or last, it was revenged upon him for it. Numb. xxxii. 23.—*Dr. South.*

He was perplexed. But for atheistical enemies, I call not upon them here to answer *me.* Let them answer their own terrors, and horrors alone at midnight; and tell themselves, whence that proceeds, if there be no God. S. Matt. ii. 3.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 9.—*John have I beheaded.* The day of affliction revives the memory of old sins, which, may be, were buried many years in the grave of forgetfulness. The night of affliction is the time, when such ghosts use to walk in men's consciences.—*Gurnall.*

V. 10.—He did not depart before, but after it was told Him what had happened, manifesting in each particular the reality of His Incarnation. ii. 52.—*S. Chrysostom.*

Lead me, O blessed Spirit, at fit times into Thy pious solitude, and there speak to my heart. Teach me, O holy Jesus, though slow and weak to follow, as I can, Thy Sacred steps, in fasting and retirement, in prayer and contemplation ; that my body may be temperate, and my soul devout, and both eternally saved. Every where I see temptations may endanger ; but everywhere I see the power of my Saviour can conquer.—*Austin.*

V. 17.—When our Saviour bade His disciples give up to the hunger of the multitude their own scanty stock of provisions, a stock so scanty, that the wildest dream of an enthusiast could never fancy such a supply equal to the wants of so many, do we find them hesitating, or refusing, to contribute the little in their power, because they could do no more? No. . . Even so should Christians exert themselves for the relief of the poor. . . If we do our best in our station, and commit, in humble faith, the issue of our whole to God, we may be sure that our exertions, however small, our alms, however scanty (provided we can do no more) will not be thrown away. . . Oh, it will be a glorious sight hereafter, when the Books of Providence are laid open before our eyes, to see by what secret springs, what humble exertions, what meek, and modest charities the happiness of families, the support of nations, the great machine of the world itself have been regulated and influenced : to witness, how God's Providence may have given power and energy to the feeble alms of a widow ; or, to the silent prayers of those, who had prayers only to bestow ; or, how a cup of cold water, given in the Name of Christ, shall in no wise lose its reward.—*Bp. Heber.*

Loaves and fishes. It is of the greatest importance, that we should resist the temptation, frequently so strong, of annexing a familiar, facetious, or irreverent idea to a Scriptural usage, a Scriptural text, or a Scriptural name. Nor should we hold ourselves guiltless, though we may have been misled by mere negligence, or want of reflection. We are bound to keep the pages of the Bible, clear of any impression, tending to diminish the blessing of habitual respect and reverence towards our Maker's Law.—*Palgrave.*

V. 16.—*He Blessed* ("Gave thanks," S. John vi. 11.) To "give thanks" was the piety of His human nature; but this *Blessing* came from the virtue of His Divine nature. He did infuse a new miraculous quality into the loaves, and imparted a seminal power unto them of increase and multiplication. Gen. i. 22, 28.—*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 17.—A mighty miracle; but we shall not be so much astonished at the thing done, if we consider Who was the doer of it. He it was, here multiplying in the hands of those, who brake, the five loaves, who to such a degree multiplies the seed, sprouting in the earth, that with a few grains sown whole barns are replenished. But simply, because He does this every year of our lives, nobody wonders at it.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 18.—If your thoughts are not abroad, if you are not taken up with things about you, if you despise what the world prizes, if you have a distaste for what the world longs after, if you shun disputes, if you are insensible to ill usage, and forget injuries, then you are *alone;*

otherwise, however complete your solitude in the body may be, you are far from being truly alone. Do you not see, that it is possible for you to be retired, even in a crowd? And in a tumult, even then to be alone? Thus then, however great the number of persons you converse with, you may be still alone, if you will but refrain from curious searching into their conversation, or rashly setting up for a judge of it. S. John xvii. 16.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 21.—Timely was our Lord's command, that *no one should tell* that He was Christ, in order that, when offences should be taken away, and the sufferings of the cross completed, a proper opinion of Him might be firmly rooted in the minds of the hearers. . . For that, which has once taken root, and afterwards been torn up, when fresh planted, will scarcely ever be preserved; but that, which was once planted, and continues undisturbed, mounts up easily. For, if Peter himself was offended merely by what he heard, what was it likely the common sort would feel; being first told that He is Son of God, and then seeing Him crucified and even spit upon? xviii. 34; S. John xvi. 12.—*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 23.—To *come after Christ*, is to receive Him, and to follow Him, as He is our *Prophet*, our *Priest*, and our *King*. In this respect, each several act of faith in Him must have its own corresponding act of self-denial. Would we receive Him as our Prophet; we must deny our proud carnal wisdom: as our Priest; we must deny our own merits and righteousness: as our King; we must renounce our own wills and affections. This comprises the whole of our Baptismal vow.—*J. Ford.*

Love the cross of Christ, and be content to have your faith tried every day by some Cross, or other, as it pleaseth God to put on you. And, if God putteth no grievous Cross on you, let your brethren's Cross be your Cross; which is a certain token of true brotherly love.—*J. Bradford.*

V. 25.—*The whole world.* The just valuation of all earthly things is such, as that the wise Christian cannot but set a low price upon them. At best, they are but glassy ware, which, the finer it is, is so much the more brittle. They are like those gay bubbles, which seem to represent pleasing colours; but, in their flying up, instantly vanish. As for honour, what a mere shadow it is! Upon the least cloud interposed, it is gone, and leaves no mention where it was. As for strength and vigour of body, how often doth sickness pull the strongest man on his knees, making him confess that youth, as well as childhood, is "Vanity." As for pleasure, it dies in the birth; and is not therefore worthy to come into this bill of mortality. iv. 5; Eccl. i. 1–3; S. John iv. 13; 1 S. John ii. 15–17.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 26.—He will appear, not only *in His own glory,* but *in the glory of His Father* also: as if there were something more, than He had already received at His right hand; that is, He will come from thence to judge the quick and the dead, to sustain the very place of the Supreme Lord and Governor of the world, to whom men and Angels are accountable for their actions. This is a thing, that is still behind; and there are, it seems, some

Royal Majestic robes, belonging to this high Office, which He hath not yet put on. Rev. xi. 17.—*Bp. Patrick.*

V. 29.—If the soul of a Christian be ever "transformed by the renewing of his mind," it must be, not while he is in the hurry and vanity of the world below, but when he leaves the world, and, following the steps of his dear Lord and Master, ascends by faith to the Mount of Transfiguration, and is on his knees before God, remembering it is written, *While He prayed, He was Transfigured.* iii. 21; xxiv. 51.—*Bp. Horne.*

If we would be sure of this, that our bodies shall be conformed to His in the Glory to come, let us see that our souls are here conformed to His in that Humility, which He so much manifested, whilst He dwelt amongst men. If we would then, that "our vile body be made like His Glorious Body," let our proud heart now be made like His humble heart. Rom. vi. 5; Col. i. 18; Phil. iii. 21.—*S. Bernard.*

In spiritual worship, there is Communion with God; for the mind, when it understands, does, in a sense, become the thing, that it doth understand; and in worship, the mind receives the form of the object, it worshippeth. Exodus xxxiv. 33; 2 Cor. iii. 18.—*Dr. Whichcote.*

V. 31.—When Moses and Elias appeared in glory, to converse with our Transfigured Saviour on the Mount, their discourse was not on the government of kingdoms, the engagement of great armies, &c. These are the solemn trifles, that amuse mortals; but they discoursed upon the chief subject of the inspired Book—*the Decease,*

which He should accomplish at Jerusalem; those meritorious Passions, and miraculous Death, that were to redeem and save a whole world. Rev. v. 6, 9, 12.—*R. Boyle.*

V. 32.—*Heavy with sleep.* For, as a worm, creeping with her belly on the ground, with her portion and share of Adam's curse, lifts up its head to partake a little of the blessings of the air, and opens the junctions of her imperfect body, and curls her little rings into knots and combinations, drawing up her tail to the neighbourhood of the head's pleasure and motion—but still it must return to abide the state of its own nature, and dwell and sleep upon the dust—so are the hopes of a mortal man: he opens his eyes, and looks upon fine things at a distance, and shuts them again with weakness; because they are too glorious to behold. Wisd. ix. 13–16; 2 Cor. v. 2; Rom. vii.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 33.—When Peter saw Moses and Elias with Christ in His Transfiguration, though he had but a glimpse of Glory, yet he saith, *It is good for us to be here.* But Oh, how infinite good will it be, to be in Heaven! How shall we then be rapt up with Glory, when "we shall be for ever with the Lord," "in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore!" On the contrary, how exceeding terrible it will be, to be shut out from the presence of God. Oh, the unspeakable horror and dread! Oh, the infinite shame of that man, who is in such a case! S. Matt. viii. 11, 12; xxv. 41; 2 Thess. i. 7–11; Rev. xxii. 15.—*Abp. Usher.*

Oh, the transporting pleasure of that Blessed vision, which now I can hardly think of without an ecstasy; when my poor longing mind, which here gropes about for truth in a dark dungeon of error and ignorance (1 Cor. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. v. 2), shall be let forth into the Heavenly light, to see, as it is seen, and know, as it is known! How will it fix its greedy eyes upon God, of whose acquaintance it is now so desirous! With what infinite delight will its winged and active thoughts hover in the light of His countenance, which, through every moment of Eternity, will be still revealing new beauties to us; such, as will not only for ever employ, but for ever inflame, our meditations! Rev. xxii. 20, 21.—*Dr. J. Scott.*

His Transfiguration was a bright ray of Glory; but then, also, He entered into *a cloud,* and was told a sad story, what He was to *suffer* at Jerusalem. . . For this Jesus was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds, as a Sacrament, to confirm a promise, and establish a grace. He was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

The *cloud* was a type of Christ's mild appearance; for it was seated, not between Seraphims, fiery Angels, messengers and instruments of wrath, but between the Cherubims, which had the shape of men, lovely and meek men. . . Christ was the truth of the cloud. In his flesh did God so appear, that He might be reduced to the sight of men; and He appeared for those uses, whereunto the cloud was designed, for direction and protection. Ex. xiii. 21, 22; Isa. iv. 5; Heb. ix. 5.—*Bp. Lake.*

V. 36.—(Conf. S. Mark ix. 9.) A wise prohibition; for, judging by the hasty passionate words of S. Peter, the almost natural effect of this overwhelming spectacle, too bright for mortal eye and passing all understanding, we could have expected no adequate account of the matter from him, had he been allowed to declare the vision, under the impulse of present feeling. Time and reflection, and, above all, the guidance of the Spirit were needful, in order to raise and direct the Apostle's mind to a right knowledge of the mystery, and to make him a faithful exponent of the great doctrines connected with it. S. John xiii. 7; 2 S. Pet. i. 16–18.—*J. Ford.*

Obedience is a virtue of great necessity even in the smallest things; and they, that are subject to obey, must not examine with what little prejudice a small Command may be broke, but rather consider with what great ease it may be kept. Things forbidden, says the School, are of two sorts; some things are absolutely evil in themselves, and therefore are prohibited, as murder and adultery; some things are prohibited by just authority, and thereupon, respectively, become evil, as the eating of the forbidden fruit in Paradise: if God had not expressly prohibited that tree to man, it had been no sin to taste of it; so our Saviour made that sinful by His Command, which otherwise had been harmless to be spoken of, if He had not encharged His disciples to obsequiousness. And they performed that secresy, which they undertook, not envying their brethren the relation of those things, which they had seen, but observing that time of restraint,
h their Master had prefixed; and thus they reap
e even out of their infirmity, that, although they

were unfit to speak of such transcendent miracles, as yet, yet they knew their duty to hold their peace.—*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 37.—*Come down,* Peter, thou wast desiring to rest upon the Mount; come down to labour in the earth, in the earth to serve, in the earth to be despised and crucified. The Life came down, that He might be slain; the Bread came down, that He might hunger; the Way came down, that He might be wearied in the way; the Fountain came down, that He might thirst—and dost thou refuse to labour? Seek not thine own. S. John xxi. 19; Rom. viii. 29.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 38.—*Cried out and said with tears.* When S. Augustine's mother lamented the ill courses, that her son took in his youth, still that priest (S. Ambrose), to whom she imparted her sorrows, said, "That son, for whom so good a mother hath shed so many tears, cannot perish." Little knowest thou what thou hast received at God's hands by the prayers of the Saints in heaven, that enwrap thee in their General prayers for the Church Militant. Little knowest thou what the Public prayers of the congregation, what the private prayers of particular devout friends, that lament thy carelessness and negligence in praying for thyself, have wrung, and extorted out of God's hands, in their charitable importunity.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 40.—As melancholy in the body is the hardest humour to be purged, so is melancholy in the soul, the distrust of thy salvation, too. Flashes of presumption calamities will quench; but clouds of desperation

calamities thicken upon us. Prox. xviii. 14; 2 Cor. ii. 7. —*Dr. Donne.*

V. 42.—*As he was yet a coming, the devil tare him.* If you mean to follow Christ, reckon for temptations, to meet them, even at first, and so in all the way. . . This expert enemy knows his interest well, and does not thus bestir himself lightly, but feels that his kingdom is in danger, and that he shall certainly be a loser. 1 Thess. i. 6.—*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 44.—*Son of man.* I see that the man, whom we seek, as qualified to be our Mediator, must be of this description: He must not die of necessity, because He must be omnipotent; nor of debt, because He must not be a sinner: and yet, He must die voluntarily; because it was necessary He should do so, as Mediator. . . As it is necessary that man should satisfy for the sin of man, therefore none could make satisfaction, but He, who was properly man, Adam himself, or one of his race. That Adam himself could satisfy, was impossible. Gen. iii. 15. —*Anselm.*

V. 45.—The words of our Lord were clear and intelligible enough, and the ideas, conveyed by them, were all common and familiar; but, if that saying were admitted, they must part with their beloved principle (an earthly kingdom of the Messiah): therefore it follows, *They were afraid to ask Him of that saying,* lest He should carry on the subject, and leave them no way to escape. They had already heard more, than they would believe; and, therefore, as to anything farther, thought

it best to remain in the dark. Eph. v. 13.—*Jones* (of Nayland).

V. 48.—It is to be considered that, as our having Grace is from God's free and undeserved favour and bounty, so, that we need Grace is from our own weakness and infirmity; and that, as to be proud of God's other gifts is like a beggar being proud of his clothes, so to be proud of Grace is, as if a beggar should be proud of his crutches. S. Augustine cautions against this sort of pride in these words. "Next, let a man, knowing as he must do, that the Grace of God has made him what he is, beware of another ensnaring species of pride, that of despising others under a vaunting sense of God's Grace bestowed on himself." 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.—*Norris.*

In My Name. Why should not an exhortation, that wooes you for Christ's sake, move your hearts to duty; as a prayer, put up by you in His Name, moves God's heart to mercy?—*Gurnall.*

He, that lives here the life of an humble Christian, shall there be sure to reign the life of a victorious Saint. —*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 49.—John is here taught that no person should be discouraged from the good, which he has attained in part; but that he should rather be stimulated to the further pursuit of the good, that remains yet to be attained. Phil. iii. 12, 16.—*Bede.*

Casting out devils, &c. If sectarians, persons wilfully and obstinately separating themselves from the Unity of the Church, and opposing her authority, will work a

Miracle, in proof of their Commission to act in Christ's Name, we cannot *forbid* them; we must rather wish them "God speed." To prove their right to Minister in His Name, they must produce either a regular Vocation and Mission; or, the attestation of Miracles, *i.e.*, of an extraordinary calling of God. Numb. xi. 26–30.—*J. Ford.*

I am not afraid to say, that neither in reason, nor in Scripture, can I discover more than two manners, in which labourers in the vineyard receive their mission from God. The first an immediate illapse of God's anointing Spirit, confirmed by some acknowledged and public Miracles; the other an Authoritative recognition of our claims and acceptance of our services, by those persons, whoever they are, to whom God has entrusted this authority.—*Bp. Heber.*

V. 50.—Accustom thyself always to observe in the first place, and in the most complete manner, the bright side of everything, and carry it back to the source, whence it is derived. Then only be quick-sighted to discover the evil, when thou art bound by duty to correct it; or, when there is danger of injury to thyself, or to others, in passing by the bad side unobserved.—*B. Overberg.*

V. 51.—*Received up.* (Verse 44. *Delivered into the hands of men.*)—The Divine and human natures are not more closely united in the Person of our Lord, each from time to time, severally, made manifest in the Sacred history, than is the connection between His "Sufferings, and the Glory that should follow"—His being *delivered*

unto men, His being *received* up unto God. (S. Mark xvi. 19). This identity between suffering and rejoicing must be found in us, His followers; the old nature suffering, the new or Divine nature in us rejoicing; the cross and the crown ever before us; our crucifixion in the flesh, our "living by the power of God." xxiv. 26; Phil. ii. 5–10; 1 S. Pet. v. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.—*J. Ford.*

V. 54.—How terrible a motion! . . Yet, if we look to the offence, it was no positive act of indignity, offered to Christ; but the mere not lodging of His train; and that, not out of a rude inhumanity, but out of a religious scruple. What would have been said, if these Samaritans had pursued Him with swords, and staves, and stones? Whom shall we find free from cruelty of revenge, when even the disciple of love was thus overtaken? . . This very disciple, as if in way of abundant satisfaction for this rash oversight, calls more for love, than all the rest of his Master's train. (1 S. John iv. 16; iv. 7, 8.—It is he, too, who directs us to "Try the spirits, whether they be of God." 1 S. John iv. 1.) What would not this holy Apostle have given to have recalled this fiery motion? The more mercy and charity in us, the more we have of God: the more fury and revenge, of Satan.—*Bp. Hall.*

S. Basil observes, that, among many seeming contradictions in Scripture, one is of a fact, or work done, to the precept. The Command is, "Thou shalt not kill;" Sampson killed himself; Phineas with his spear nails the adulterous couple to the earth. The Father's Rule is the rule of wisdom itself,—When we read in Scripture a fact commended, which falls cross with the precept, we must leave

the fact, and cleave to the precept; for examples are not rules of life, but provocations of good works. 2 Cor. iii. 6.—*Farindon.*

V. 55.—*He rebuked.* A faithful reprover is a very great help to us in our Christian course. He is to be valued above the greatest treasure. "He, that would be safe," says one of the ancients, "must have a faithful friend, or a bitter enemy;" that he may fly from vice by the monitions of the one, or invectives of the other.—*Dr. Horneck.*

In this matter, there is no surer, safer, nor more universal Rule, than that of the great Apostle; a Rule, which excludes the possibility of error, clearly distinguishes between the Law and the Gospel, and leads us on to perfection: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—Our *manner of spirit* is Christ. 1 Cor. xi. 1; Phil. ii. 5; iii. 17.—*J. Ford.*

Our zeal must be kindled with pure fire from God's altar; that it may rather warm, than burn; enliven rather, than enflame.—*Dr. Whichcote.*

V. 56.—He came not in the spirit of Elias, but with meekness and gentle insinuations, mild as the breath of heaven, not willing to disturb the softest stalk of a violet. S. Matt. xi. 28–30; xxi. 5.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it hath conquered the world, and triumphed over all, that opposed it, without any other weapon, but its own victorious beauty and reasonableness. . . By its own native

light, it vanquished the ignorance and prejudice of the world; and by pure dint of reason subdued men's minds to its empire. For, it was not by racks and tortures, that it converted infidels, and convinced heretics; but by reason and miracles: and, till it began to be sophisticated with temporal interests and designs, it taught its followers only to endure, but not to inflict, persecutions: for this was their language in the purer ages—Religion presseth no man to her service, and disdains to have any followers, but volunteers.—*Dr. J. Scott.*

V. 58.—It frequently happens that we may learn the true character of persons, admitted to the Lord's Presence, not so much by their declarations, or questions, as by His answers. For He saw their hearts, and in their hearts read the real meaning and motive of their words. This man, as S. Matthew informs us (viii. 19), was "a scribe," and he probably had an eye to some post of high honour and worldly distinction in Christ's Kingdom: hence, the discomfiture of his ambitious hopes in the meek and lowly disclaimer; "*Foxes have holes, &c.* Probably the person, next mentioned, who was a disciple, while he professed so much duty towards his deceased father, was rather looking to his share in the patrimony, and was actuated by the love of money, as the other by the love of worldly advancement. Refer to ver. 47; Ezek. xiv. 1–5; Heb. iv. 12, 13.—*J. Ford.*

The religious world has many features, which are distressing to a holy man. He sees in it much proposal and ostentation, covering much surface. But Christianity is deep and substantial. A man is soon enlisted, but he

is not soon made a soldier; he is easily put into the ranks to make a show there, but he is not so easily brought to do the duty of the ranks. Such persons are alive to religious talk; but, if you speak to them of religious tempers, the subject grows irksome. viii. 13; S. Mark vi. 20.—*R. Cecil.*

We should often blush for our best actions, if the world did but see all the motives on which they are grounded. xvi. 15.—*Palmer.*

The Son of man, &c. What a world of meditation is opened to us in this single passage.—*Bp. Medley.*

V. 60.—Our Lord no more discourages here the religious respect, due to a deceased father, than He recently disclaimed His own duty to a living mother (viii. 21). In both cases, the lesson is the same—that spiritual ties are more Sacred than carnal and earthly ones, and that, when they are opposed, the former are paramount; the latter must yield. xviii. 29.—*J. Ford.*

Let no man think, when our Saviour gave that short answer to the cold disciple, *Let the dead bury their dead,* that He slights this work, as unmeet for the care of a zealous follower of His: no; it is a good and necessary duty to be performed to any son of the Church, much more to a natural father; neither could he possibly have been a good disciple, that would have been an ill son. But our Saviour's intention was to imply a comparison of the necessity and worth of these two duties, burying of the dead, and following of Christ: both were good; but the following of Christ far more excellent, inasmuch as

those, that were "dead in their sins," might be capable of that service; but of this, in our Saviour's sense, none, but the regenerate. Gen. l. 4–6; S. Matt. xxvi. 10.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 61.—The man seems to have had in his mind the case of Elisha, to whom Elijah gave leave; for Jesus in reply employs the figure of a *plough* (1 Kings xix. 19). The Kingdom of God requires more zeal of us, than does the discipline of the Law; nor is it safe for us to appeal to Elijah (ver. 54), or to Elisha.—*Bengel.*

V. 62.—Lot's wife *looked back;* and God never gave her leave to look forward again. . . God hath set our eyes in our foreheads to look forward, not backward; not to be proud of that, which we have done, but diligent in that, which we are to do. Gal. iii. 3; Phil. iii. 13.—*Dr. Donne.*

A Christian must not be like Hezekiah's sun, that "went backward;" nor like Joshua's sun, that "stood still;" but like David's sun, that "as a bridegroom comes out of his chamber, and as a champion rejoiceth to run his race." Ps. xix.; Heb. iii. 14.—*Dean Boys.*

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 1.—*Appointed—sent.* Here, as in the case of the Twelve, we have the same distinction of *Vocati et Missi*, the being first *appointed*, or *called*, and afterwards *sent* (ix. 1, 2), first, Ordination, then, Mission; both, too, accompanied with the gift of the Holy Ghost to enable them to fulfil the office assigned. How exactly has the Church retained the Divine model, and primitive institution! May the same Spirit inwardly call, outwardly send, and, when sent, mightily strengthen the labourers in our vineyard, according to the most true promise, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." S. Matt. xxviii. 20.—*J. Ford.*

As the husbandman, leading the yoke of oxen, tills the ground, after the same manner did the Lord Jesus, the noble and true Husbandman, having yoked the Apostles *two and two*, send them forth; cultivating Himself, together with them, the ground of those, who hear and believe in truth. ix. 62; 1 Cor. ix. 8–10; 1 Tim. v. 18. —*Macarius.*

Single endeavours seldom prosper; many hands make the work both quick and sure. They can be no friends to the happy estate of a family, or Church, that labour to cause distractions. Division makes certain way for ruin. Eccl. iv. 7–9; Acts xiii. 2; xv. 27, 37.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 5.—"Charity thinketh no evil." We are not to

suspect or pre-suppose evil in any, till by their works it is manifest. In a kind loving manner we are to "salute" all. Now this was imperative under the sterner dispensation of the Law. Even heathens were not at once to be given up, as hopeless and desperate; but terms of amity were to be offered; and this, during a time of war. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim Peace unto it, &c." Deut. xx. 10–12. Oh, let "our feet be ever shod with this preparation of the Gospel of Peace," before we go out to fight the battles of the Lord; and may we love all, that we may win some! xiii. 34. Our Church walks in this spirit of peace, and love to her members. Witness her frequent forms of Absolution and Benediction. In the great congregation she cries aloud, "The Lord be with you!" And in private life, when the need of peace is most deeply felt, in the chambers of sickness and of death, she draws near to the afflicted in the same spirit; for "the Minister, coming into the sick person's house, shall say, Peace be to this house, and to all, that dwell in it." Absolution and Benediction, as golden threads, are interwoven with the entire substance of our Ministry. Numb. vi. 22–27; 2 Cor. v. 18–21.—*J. Ford.*

V. 7.—*Go not from house to house.* It is one thing to be humble and condescending; it is another, to render yourself common, cheap, and contemptible. The men of the world know when a Minister is out of his place, when they can oppress him by numbers or circumstances, when they can make him laugh, while his Office frowns. Well will it be for him, if, being found, like Peter, on dangerous

ground, he is not seduced, virtually at least, to deny his Master. Titus ii. 15.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 11.—*Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* Many other illustrations and holy graces are to be imputed to God's Spirit, besides that, by which we are effectually converted. God speaks to us many times, when we answer Him not, and shines about our eyes, when we either wink or sleep. Our many short-winded ejaculations towards Heaven, our frequent but weak inclination to good, our ephemêral wishes, that no man can distinguish from true piety, but by their sudden death; our every-day resolutions of obedience, whilst we continue in sin, are arguments that God's Spirit hath shined on us, though the warmth, that it produced, be soon chilled with the damp, it meets with in us. . . But, if you will refuse His Word, your stubbornness may repel and frustrate God's work, but not annihilate it; though you will not be saved by it, it is God's still, and so shall continue to witness against you at the Day of doom. Every word, that was ever darted from that Spirit, as a beam, or javelin, of that piercing sun, every atom of that flaming sword, as the Word is phrased (Eph. vi.) shall not, though it be rebated, vanish: the Day of vengeance shall instruct your souls, that it was sent from God, and, since it was once refused, hath been kept in store, not to upbraid, but damn you. Prov. i. 24–33; Heb. iv. 12, 13; S. John xii. 48.—*Dr. Hammond.*

There is a great difference to be noted between *the kingdom of God coming nigh unto us*, and our being

"not far from the kingdom of God." In the latter case, we begin to yield to the Divine attraction, to draw nigh, and to co-operate with God's gracious efforts to save us; in the former, we remain passive, or make resistance. S. Mark xii. 34.—*J. Ford.*

V. 15.—None sink so far into hell, as those that come nearest Heaven; because they fall from the greatest height. Ver. 18.—*Gurnall.*

Then I saw, that there was a way to hell even from the gates of Heaven, as well as from the city of Destruction. xiii. 26, 27; S. John vi. 70.—*Bunyan.*

V. 16.—*Despiseth you.* Turn not your attention to our flesh, by which the Word is given out to you; for hungry men regard not the meanness of the dish, but the preciousness of the food. 1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Kings xvii. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 7.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 17.—Was the *Name of Jesus* at first sufficient to *cast out devils?* And shall man be more refractory than they? Shall the exorcist say to the evil spirit (Acts xix.), "I adjure thee by the name of Jesus;" and the devil give place? Shall an Apostle speak unto us in the same Name, and shall we refuse? Shall *they* obey that Name, which signifieth nothing unto them; for "He took not on Him the nature of angels," and so is not their Saviour: and can *we* deny obedience unto Him, who "took on Him the seed of Abraham?" Mal. i. 6.—*Bp. Pearson.*

V. 19.—We have a general promise that, in our combats with them, God will give us victory, and bruise their

leader, Satan, himself under our feet. Our Redeemer is exalted above the heavens; and human nature, in the Second Adam, restored to dominion over all the earth. And, though at present the Apostle's lot may be ours, to "fight with beasts," with evil men, evil passions, and evil spirits, yet, "through God we shall do great acts." It is He, that shall "tread down those, that rise up against us;" till, finally triumphant over the last enemy, and exalted to the Eternal throne, we shall view the earth beneath us, and the sun and the stars shall be dust under our feet. Ps. viii.; S. James iii. 7.—*Bp. Horne.*

It is a maxim among us, Christians, that we cannot possibly suffer any real hurt, if we cannot be convicted of doing any real harm. You may kill indeed, but you cannot *hurt* us. 1 S. Pet. iii. 13.—*Justin Martyr.*

V. 21.—The Country Parson is generally sad, because he knows nothing but the Cross of Christ, his mind being defixed on it with those nails, wherewith his Master was; or, if he have any leisure to look off from thence, he meets continually with two sad spectacles—sin and misery—God dishonoured every day, and man afflicted. Jer. ix. 1; Ps. cxix. 36.—*G. Herbert.*

I thank Thee. All the misery in the world carries no proportion to the infinite happiness of Almighty God, which ought to be the highest object of our joy, and may drown and swallow up all the pretences and excuses of excessive sadness. We ought to rejoice in God, not only that He is our God, but that He is God, infinitely holy and infinitely happy; that He is self-blessed, glorious in

all things; and that His enemies cannot reach, nor unsettle His throne. This is the most certain and constant, the most pure and heavenly joy. Ps. xvi. 11; 1 Tim. vi. 15; Phil. iv. 4.—*H. Scougal.*

Faith and humility are the only spells, which conjure up the image of heavenly things into the letter of the inspired Word. Ps. xxv. 8, 13; S. James i. 21.—*J. H. Newman.*

V. 22.—The Trinity is known only unto itself, through the perfect Unity of the Divine Essence. Though the Holy Ghost is not here mentioned, yet, in these and like passages, He cannot be excluded, but is necessarily to be understood. The Father reveals the Son; the Son reveals the Father; and in this sense the Son *glorifies* the Father, and the Father *glorifies* the Son, as it is written, S. John xii. 28; xvii. 1, 4. The Spirit reveals and glorifies both the Father and the Son. 1 Cor. xii. 3; Gal. i. 15, 16.—*J. Ford.*

Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High; whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His Name, yet our soundest knowledge is, that we know Him not, as He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence, concerning Him, is our silence, when we confess without confession, that His Glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. Isa. vi. 2; 1 Tim. vi. 16. —*Hooker.*

V. 23.—Now hath God scattered all these clouds; and we behold, as in a mirror, the Glory of the Lord with

open face. Our elder fathers in the Old Testament had only a dim candle to guide their feet; we have the bright sunbeams: they had only the green blade of corn; we have the plentiful increase, even as in the time of harvest: they had the shadow; we have the light: they had only a drop to refresh themselves; we have the whole stream of God's mercy poured out upon us. S. John i. 17; Heb. xi. 39, 40; 1 S. Pet. i. 12.—*Bp. Jewel.*

V. 24.—For us, I say, who have seen a marvellous light, thereby only to enlighten our brains, and not our hearts, to divert that knowledge to some poor low unworthy ends, to gather nothing out of all our studies, which may advance God's Kingdom—in us this is infinitely beyond the guilt of heathenism. This will cause their *ignorance* to rise up in judgment against our *knowledge*, and, in fine make us curse that light, which we have used to guide us only to the chambers of death. —*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 26.—*How* readest thou? Our Lord, as a searcher of the heart, having His eye ever fixed on the secret motives and internal character of those, who approached Him, would here seem to lay the stress, not on *what* is read, but *how* it is read. "Take heed *how* ye hear," was a similar caution, in respect to hearing God's Word. We should frequently apply such warnings, and use such self-examination in our treatment of the sacred Volume, and always beware of trusting in outward performances, or mere speculative knowledge; since God looketh within a man and maketh such, as are simple-minded and true-

hearted, to become wise unto Salvation." Ps. l. 23; S. John vii. 17.—*J. Ford.*

V. 27.—*The Lord thy God.* Were there not some perfectly infinite self-sufficient Goodness, and that One, man would be a most miserably distracted creature. As the restless appetite within man after some Infinite and Sovereign Good (without the enjoyment of which it could never be satisfied) does commend unto us the notion of a Deity, so the perpetual distractions and divisions, that would arise in the soul upon a plurality of Deities, may seem no less to evince the Unity of that Deity. Were not this Chief Good perfectly One, were there any other equal to it, man's soul would hang *in æquilibrio*, equally poised, equally desiring the enjoyment of both, but moving to neither, like a piece of iron between two loadstones of equal virtue. S. Mark xii. 29.—*J. Smith.*

Since there are two Commandments, the love of God and the love of our neighbour, "on which hang the Law and the Prophets," not without reason does Scripture put one for both; as in that (Rom. viii. 28), "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God;" and sometimes the love of our neighbour, as in that (Gal. v. 14), "All the Law is fulfilled," &c. Rom. xiii. 10.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 30.—(We should rather, in a spiritual sense, *go up* from Jericho to Jerusalem). We willingly exert ourselves to climb a mountain for the sake of a fine view, or a pure air. Let us then use all our strength to climb the mountain of Zion, where we shall breathe a truly

vivifying atmosphere, and from whose heights we shall behold the true Eden, the valley of peace, through which flow living waters, and where the tree of life flourishes. May the Lord bestow the necessary will and energy upon us all. Isa. ii. 1–4.—*Felix Neff.*

V. 31.—To say a thing is a *chance*, or casualty, as it relates to second causes, is not profaneness, but a great truth; as signifying no more, than that there are some events, besides the knowledge, purpose, expectation, and power of second agents. And for this very reason, because they are so, it is the Royal Prerogative of God Himself, to have all these loose, uneven, fickle uncertainties under His disposal.—*Dr. South.*

V. 32.—"The man, who covetously keeps his property to himself, is to be accounted avaricious, as well as he, who steals his neighbour's property," says S. Augustine. Viewed in this light, the Priest and the Levite have some share in the guilt of the thieves; for when we have it in our power to do good, and do it not, we "do evil." S. Mark iii. 4; S. James iv. 17.—*J. Ford.*

V. 33.—*As he journeyed.* The unparalleled story of Joseph seems to be made up of nothing else but chances and little contingencies, all tending to mighty ends. Ez. ii. 3–5; Esth. vi. 1; Philem. 15.—*Dr. South.*

Had compassion. A man, bountiful in bestowing external things, gives something apart from himself; but he, who has tears and lamentations for a neighbour's woe, hath imparted to him something of himself. 1 Thess. ii. 8.—*S. Gregory.*

When he saw, &c. The way to be sensible of another man's misery is first to feel it ourselves: it must be our's; or, if it be not our's, we must make it our's, before our hearts will melt. I must take my brother into myself, before I help him; I must be that Lazar, that begs of me, and then I give. I must be that wounded man by the way-side, and then I pour my oil and wine into his wounds and take care of him. I must feel the hell of sin in myself, before I can snatch my brother out of the fire. Ex. xxiii. 9; Heb. iv. 15; x. 24; xiii. 1–3.—*Farindon.*

V. 34.—The righteous administration of "Mercy and Judgment" in the Kingdom of Messiah is a topic, on which His subjects always expatiate with pleasure and profit. His mercy encourageth the greatest of sinners to hope; His judgments forbid the best of men to presume. Heb. xii. 6, 7.—*Bp. Horne.*

V. 35.—*He departed.* This Samaritan had no leisure for a longer stay upon earth. He must needs return whence he came.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 37.—Let the reader consider the temper, expressed in that rancorous reflection, "Thou art a *Samaritan*, and hast a devil!" (S. John viii. 48.) Let him compare that inveterate malevolence with the benign and compassionate spirit of our amiable traveller. Then let him say, whether he ever beheld a finer or a bolder contrast. . . I would observe further, that the virulent animosity of *the Jew* discovers itself even in the lawyer's reply. *He, that showed mercy on him.* He will not so much, as *name* the *Samaritan;* especially in a case, where he could not be

named, without an honourable distinction. So strongly marked, and so exactly preserved, are the manners, or distinguishing qualities, of each person in the Sacred narrations. S. John iv. 9, 27.—*J. Hervey.*

The Master does not only rule the scholar's book for him, but writes him a copy with his own hand. Christ's command is our rule: His Life is our copy.—*Gurnall.*

In another walk, he saw a poor man with a poorer horse, that was fallen under his load; they were both in distress, and needed present help, which *Mr. Herbert* perceiving, put off his Canonical coat, and helped the poor man to unload, and after to load his horse. The poor man blessed him for it; and he blessed the poor man, and was so like the good Samaritan, that he gave him money to refresh both himself and his horse; and told him that, "If he loved himself, he should be merciful to his beast." Thus he left the poor man, and at his coming to his musical friends at Salisbury, they began to wonder that Mr. George Herbert, who used to be so trim and neat, came into that company so soiled and discomposed; but he told them the occasion; and when one of the company told him, "he had disparaged himself by so dirty an employment;" his answer was, that "The thought of what he had done would prove music to him at midnight; and that the omission of it would have upbraided, and made discord in his conscience, whensoever he should pass by that place; for, if I be bound to pray for all, that are in distress, I am sure that I am bound, so far as it is in my power, to practise what I pray for. And, though I do not wish for the like occasion every day, yet let me tell

you, I would not willingly pass one day of my life, without comforting a sad soul, or showing mercy; and I praise God for this occasion. And now let us tune our instruments."—*Is. Walton's Life of G. Herbert.*

V. 39.—Be not disturbed for trifles. By the practice of this rule, we should come in time to think most things, too trifling to disturb us.—*Adam.*

V. 40.—O man, is it no part of your duty to search the Scriptures, on account of the distraction of many earthly cares? Rather, for this very reason, it is your duty; you, of all others, need their help.—*S. Chrysostom.*

Our Lord does not then forbid hospitality, but the *troubling about many things;* that is to say, hurry and anxiety. And mark the wisdom of our Lord, in that at first He said nothing to Martha; but, when she sought to tear away her sister from hearing, then the Lord took occasion to reprove her. Conf. S. Matt. xii. 46–48.—*Theophylact.*

Ejaculatory prayer reconciles Martha's employment with Mary's devotion.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

This notable difference in their manner of receiving the Lord, may have arisen from the different lights, under which they regarded His Person. Martha may have regarded Him, as come to establish a temporal kingdom; and therefore she was *cumbered with much serving,* in order to do Him the greatest honour: Mary, on the other hand, viewing Him, as a Spiritual teacher and deliverer, waited upon Him in silent attention and *sat at His feet.* As is the nature and degree of our faith, so is our conduct;

according to our inward apprehension of the Lord, is our outward demeanour towards Him. vii. 47; Col. ii. 6.—*J. Ford.*

V. 41.—Christ tells us that there is but one thing necessary; nature tells us that every thing is necessary, but that. Ps. xxvii. 4; Phil. iii. 13.—*Bp. Hall.*

"Mind few things," said one, "if you would preserve tranquillity:" he might rather have said, mind only what is necessary, and what the reason of the creature, formed for social life and public good, recommends, and in the way it directs. And this will not only secure the tranquillity, arising from virtuous action, but that also, which arises from having few things to mind. Would we cut off the most part of what we say and do, as unnecessary, we should have much leisure and freedom from trouble. We should suggest to ourselves on every occasion this question—is this necessary? But we ought to quit, not only unnecessary actions, but even imaginations; and thus superfluous actions, diverting us from our purpose, would not ensue.—*M. Antoninus.*

V. 42.—Run to and fro in the world, and in that great emporium and mart of toys and vanities find out *one thing*, that is *necessary*, if you can; though you search it, as the prophet speaks, with candles. Is it necessary to be rich? Behold Dives in hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Is it necessary to be noble? "Not many noble are chosen." Is it necessary to be learned? "Where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" Everything hath its necessity from us, not from

itself; for of itself it cannot show anything, that should make it so: it is we, that file these chains, and fashion these nails of necessity, and make her hand of brass. Riches are necessary, because we are covetous. Honour is necessary, because we are proud, and love to have the pre-eminence. Pleasure is necessary, because we love it more than God. Revenge is necessary, because we delight in blood. Lord, how many necessaries do we make, when there is but One? One, without which we ought not, and without which we cannot be happy; and that is our assimilation, and being made like unto Christ, in whom alone all the treasures of wisdom, and riches, and honour, all that is necessary for us, are to be found. xiv. 18.—*Farindon.*

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 1.—We forget that we are to *learn* to pray; and that prayer is to be learnt, as all other things, by frequency, constancy, and perseverance. Rom. viii. 26.—*Wm. Law.*

If there be any one part of religion, that requires long, gradual, and early training for its formation, it is the habit of reverential devotion.—*Bp. Medley.*

Here again (as we noted before, S. Mark i. 14), our humble and meek Redeemer condescended to follow in the wake of His forerunner, to copy from John, to *teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.* But what an accession of grace and truth has He brought to this great duty, assuring us, generally, of its acceptance, when offered in His Name; and, more particularly, of its acceptance, in regard to our peculiar wants (9–13); and then, both by precept and example, imbuing us with the right spirit of grace and supplication, the spirit of humility in the prayer of the publican; the spirit of faith and perseverance in the prayer of the woman of Canaan; the spirit of holy importunity in the parable of the widow (xviii. 1–7); the spirit of godly simplicity in His reproof of the ostentatious devotions of the Pharisee; and above all, the spirit of charity and love in His condemnation of the unmerciful servant! In all these respects, how largely has he satisfied the desire, suggested

by His own good Spirit, Lord, *teach us to pray!* And how has He exceeded His servant, whom He yet condescended to follow! xxii. 27.—*J. Ford.*

Our Lord did not frame an entirely new Prayer, in words of His own conception, but took out of the ancient Euchologies, or Prayer-books of the Jews, what was good and laudable in them, and out of them composed His prayer. The reflection of the learned Grotius upon this is very remarkable; "So far was the Lord Himself of the Christian Church from all affectation of unnecessary novelty." Our Saviour in this instance hath plainly shown us what respect we ought to have for Forms of prayer, anciently received and approved by the Church of God. Ps. lxxviii. 1–4; Jer. vi. 16.—*Bp. Bull.*

V. 2.—Either a Form of prayer is here plainly enjoined, or nothing is plain in Holy Scripture. . . Christ doth not only teach us what things we ought to ask of God, but also in what words we ought to ask them. Numb. vi. 23; x. 35, 36; Deut. xxi. 7, 8; xxvi. 5.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

In the brief summary of a few words how many sayings of the Prophets, Gospels, Apostles, discourses of the Lord, parables, precepts, are touched upon! How many duties are at once discharged; the honouring of God in the *Father*, the testimony of faith in the *Name*, the offering of obedience in the *will*, the remembrance of hope in the *kingdom*, the petition for life in the *bread*, the confession of *debts* in the prayer to *forgive*, the anxious care about *temptations* in the call for defence. What

wonder? God alone could teach, how He would have Himself prayed to. The Sacred duty, therefore, of prayer, ordained by Himself, and animated by His own Spirit, even at the time, when it proceeded from the Divine mouth, ascendeth of its own right into heaven, commending to the Father what the Son hath taught.—*Tertullian.*

The Doxology, *For Thine is the kingdom, &c.*, is left out, because it was our Saviour's intention in this place to deliver to them a Form of prayer merely petitionary; for which very reason, also, *Amen* is omitted too. For (1 Cor. xiv. 16) "He shall say *Amen at thy giving of thanks:*" and indeed, they commonly ended all their prayers, even those that consisted most of petition, with thanksgiving and benediction, concluding in this manner, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast thus done or thus commanded," or the like; and then it was answered by all, *Amen.* This we may observe in those Psalms, that conclude any portion of that Book, and end with Amen: upon what subject soever the Psalmist is engaged, either throughout the whole Psalm, or immediately before the bringing forth of Amen, still he never doth mention Amen, without some foregoing Doxology and benediction. "Blessed be the Lord God, &c. Amen and Amen." In S. Matthew therefore, we find *Amen*, because there is the Doxology; in S. Luke it is wanting, because the Doxology is so too.—*Dr. Lightfoot.*

V. 9.—Observe the gradation in these words. *Ask*, but you must not stay there; you must *seek:* nor yet must you rest satisfied there; you must *knock.* Your affections should be every day more eager and earnest;

you should pray more fervently, as it is said of Christ. xxii. 44.—*Chr. Love.*

V. 11.—Let none of you, my brethren, think slightingly of his prayer; for I tell you, that He, to whom we pray, does not so. Before it has left your mouth, He orders it to be written in His Book; and one of two things we may undoubtedly be assured of; either that He will give what we ask, or what He knows will be more profitable for us. 1. John iii. 22; v. 14.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 13.—As *bread* and *fish* in this verse may serve to represent every needful temporal benefit, so *the Holy Spirit* (Verse 13), comprehends the gift of grace, and those higher blessings, which are spiritual and eternal.—*J. Ford.*

What can He refuse to the prayers of His children, who has already given them the grace of adoption to be His children? Rom. viii. 16, 17.—*S. Augustine.*

Both the Father and the Son give the Spirit; and it is no matter whether we ask Him of the Father, or of the Son, so we ask of the Father in the Son, or of the Son in the Father. S. John xiv. 16; xv. 26.—*W. Dell.*

S. Augustine's aphorism is famous, "He, who made thee without thyself, will not justify thee without thyself." In like manner we may say: He, who gave us His Son without our asking, will not give us His Spirit, for our sanctification, without our asking.—*J. Ford.*

V. 15.—The Scriptures, no doubt, were indited by the Holy Ghost; for good men would not impose such things

on the world, and there is too much against the bad to believe them to be the authors of it.—*Palmer.*

V. 20.—Nothing seems to have more astounded the people, than the proofs of our Lord's Divine power, shown in His casting out devils. Some, who rejected the evidence of His other miracles, were by this means convinced. This it was, which so exceedingly troubled the Pharisees, and drove them to the desperate charge against Him, that He was in secret compact with Beelzebub: and yet all this was but the exercise of *the finger* of God. What must be the power of His mighty *hand* and outstretched *arm?* "Thou, even Thou, O God, art to be feared!" ix. 43; Ps. viii. 3; xcviii. 2.—*J. Ford.*

So great was the evidence of the Spirit of God in the act of jurisdiction over the devil, that our Saviour charges them with unpardonable guilt in their wilfully denying it. S. Mark xvi. 17.—*Dr. Bates.*

V. 21.—"His palace." "My house." Verse 24.—They, who are but half instructed in the principles of the Gospel, are too apt to be indifferent in their attention to the powerful operations of this infernal agent, who is almost totally forgotten in some cold and barren exhortations to moral virtue, independent of Christian faith. Perhaps it may be thought low, impertinent, and discouraging, to be bringing in the agency of the devil upon every occasion: but it is to be feared, he hath most to do now, as of old, in the heathen world, where he is least thought of. It is our duty, and will be found our greatest wisdom, to take the Christian system, as we find

it; to omit imaginary improvements, and to believe, as the Scripture directs; which informs us too plainly to be contradicted, that the deceiver hath seated himself in the human heart, and hath gotten possession of our interior economy. And, if the Scripture had given us no other evidence, this one consideration would for ever satisfy me, that our nature is depraved, and that sin from the fall of Adam is original to the constitution of man. Eph. vi. 12. —*Wm. Jones.*

V. 22.—God maketh use of that wit, wealth, power, learning, wisdom, interests, which Satan used against Christ's kingdom, as instruments and ornaments unto the Gospel; as when a magazine in war is taken, the General makes use of those arms, which were provided against him, for his own service.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

Thus it was said of the people of God in old times; "Ye shall *spoil* the Egyptians." "The jewels of silver, the jewels of gold, and the raiment," brought as trophies out of the land of bondage, served afterwards to adorn the Tabernacle and Holy place of the Most Highest. Exactly so should all our natural faculties, and all our acquired endowments, when we turn unto the Lord, be dedicated to His service, and made the instruments of "righteousness unto holiness." Exod. iii. 22; Rom. vi. 19.—*J. Ford.*

V. 23.—Our Lord affirms, that every one, who does not labour to gather sheep into His fold, as He does, scatters, as the wolf does, many from that fold, who would enter, were it not for their examples, who stay out. In all cases, like this, he, who helps not, hinders. A great part

of mankind never move, but with a crowd before them, and weigh the strength of a reason only by the numbers, it hath already convinced (S. John vii. 48). Christ knows of no man, who is neither to be rewarded, as a friend, nor punished as an ememy; He allows not the benefit of neutrality; but saith, *He, that is not with Me, is against Me.* . . There is no third or middle sort of men. It is true, of good men, some are better; and, of bad men, some worse than others. The good are not all equally the friends, nor the wicked all equally the enemies, of Christ; and for these inequalities different degrees of reward and punishment are reserved. . . From the Throne of God, down to the nethermost hell, there is not, there cannot possibly be, one moral being, who is not either the friend, or the enemy, of God. In one or other of these lights, He must regard every man, and every man must regard himself, at the final Judgment. S. Matt. xxv. 32, 46.—*P. Skelton.*

V. 24.—The *unclean* spirit *went out,* but the Holy Spirit came not in; that is, when a man is a mere negative Christian, he "ceaseth to do evil," in some ways he has formerly walked in; but he learns not "to do good." This is to lose Heaven with short shooting. God will not ask what we were *not,* but what we were. Rom. ii. 6, 7.—*Gurnall.*

Dry places. Wickedness is *a* solitary spirit. Hell, though inhabited by millions of souls, will be to each a solitude. "Men of corrupt minds" associate together on mere selfish principles, because they cannot gratify their lusts alone. There is no real charity among them; for

charity "seeketh not her own." In that state, where the means of self-indulgence shall be removed, the wicked must dwell alone; and for ever, in themselves and by themselves, be tormented. They will "seek rest in dry places, and find none." Gen. iv. 16.—*J. Ford.*

I will return. It frequently happens, that the enemy permits those, whom he has much tempted, to continue some time in quiet, that he may surprise them more easily, when they least think of him, and make them fall into sin by a violent and sudden temptation. iv. 13.—*S. Gregory.*

V. 26.—It is not in the nature of man to be, for any considerable time, neither better nor worse; nor will the principles within him, nor the spiritual good, or ill powers, that act upon him from without, long suffer him to remain in the same moral state. If the Spirit of God, together with a lively conscience and a right sense of religion, have the government of his mind, they will lead him continually upward to a more pure and spiritual nature. If the devil and vice have dominion over him, they will keep him always in motion downward, to still deeper and fouler degrees of corruption: besides, as habit always naturally grows out of practice, it will add considerably to the speed and expedition of either progress. Ps. i. 1; S. James iii. 15.—*P. Skelton.*

I have observed that when a man, who once seemed a Christian, has put off that character, and resumed his old one, he loses together with the grace, which he seemed to possess, the most amiable part of the character, that he

resumes. The best features of his natural face seem to be struck out; that, after having worn religion only as a mask, he may make a more disgusting appearance, than he did, before he assumed it.—*Cowper.*

V. 29.—Extraordinary signs are justly withholden, when ordinary proofs, adequate to the conviction of every candid mind, have been offered repeatedly, and in vain. Dives requested, in behalf of his brethren, a sign from hell; but "no sign was given;" for "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." The sign of Christ's Resurrection is therefore here given to this *evil and adulterous generation,* not as a token of confirmation, but of condemnation: but, as Bp. Andrewes writes, "It is a sign, boding good to *us-ward,* a sign of favour and good hope, which we have by the Resurrection of our Saviour; specially, if we have the true signature of it, which is true repentance," and if, moreover, we are in the Church, among the ship's company, saved by the spiritual Jonah from the depths of hell. Ex. xiv. 20; Acts ii. 47.—*J. Ford.*

V. 30.—Gentiles, as well as Jews, some in every nation, have their share and portion in Christ's Resurrection. Christ preached this truth at his first sermon at Nazareth. Naaman, the Syrian, and the widow of Sareptha, both of them heathens; yet God visited them, and sent Salvation to them. In both stories, they were remarkable types of the Resurrection; Naaman's corrupt flesh restored, "as the flesh of a young child;" the widow's son raised from the dead again; two great signs

of the Resurrection. The great prefiguration of it (in the history of Jonah) was performed among the heathen, at Nineveh, the head city of the Gentiles. When Greeks came to Christ, He acquainted them with this doctrine. (S. John xii.) The first great manifestation of His Resurrection to all His disciples was in "Galilee of the Gentiles" (S. Matt. xxviii. 16). From Galilee this preaching began (Acts ii. 7, 31–36). It is the foundation of our hope; we are "sinners of the Gentiles."—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 31.—There was an Emperor, great and mighty, as ever did wield sceptre upon earth, whose excellent virtues, coupled with wisdom, did qualify him with most advantage to examine and rightly to judge of things here; who, notwithstanding all the conveniences which his Royal estate and well settled prosperity might afford, did yet thus express his thoughts (*M. Antoninus,* Lib. ii. 11; vi. 10), "What doth it concern me to live in a world, void of God, or void of Providence?" All things seemed vain and idle to him, in case there were no God to worship, no Providence to observe, no piety to be exercised. x. 24.—*Dr. Barrow.*

V. 32.—Let us look stedfastly to the Blood of Christ, and see how precious His Blood is in the sight of God; which, being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world. Let us search into all the ages, that have gone before us; and let us learn that our Lord has, in every one of them, still given "place of repentance" to all such, as would turn to Him. . .

They were saved, though they were strangers to the Covenant of God. Gen. vii.; Jonah iii.; Acts x. 34, 35. —*S. Clemens, Rom.*

V. 34.—Conscience is no less than God's vicegerent, or deputy, doing all things by immediate commission from Him. It commands and dictates everything in God's Name, and stamps every word with an Almighty authority; so that it is, as it were, a kind of copy, or transcript of the Divine sentence, and an interpreter of the sense of heaven. Rom. ii. 14, 15.—*Dr. South.*

V. 36.—Religion may be called a Divine life (Eph. iv. 18), not only in regard to its fountain and original, having God for its author and being wrought in the souls of men by the power of His Holy Spirit; but, also, in regard to its nature, religion being a resemblance of the Divine perfections, the image of the Almighty, shining in the souls of men; nay, it is a real participation of His nature; it is a beam of the eternal light, a drop of that infinite ocean of goodness; and they, who are endued with it, may be said to have God dwelling in their souls, and "Christ formed within them."—*Scougal.*

V. 37.—*He went in.* Complaisance may be defined a constant endeavour to please those, whom we converse with, so far as we may do it innocently. It is a virtue, that blends all orders of men together in a friendly intercourse of words and actions, and is suited to that equality in human nature, which every one ought to consider, so far as is consistent with the order and economy of the world. 1 S. Pet. iii. 8.—*Addison.*

At the table of a Pharisee, upon the sight of the clean outside of his cup, our Lord discovers his inward parts, *full of ravening and wickedness.* At Jacob's well, He poureth forth to the woman of Samaria the water of life. After He had supped with His disciples, He takes the cup, and calls the wine His Blood, and Himself the true Vine. Thus did wisdom publish itself in every place, upon every occasion; the well, the table, the highway side, every place was a pulpit; every occasion a text; and every good lesson a sermon. Prov. i. 20, 21; 2 Tim. iv. 2.—*Farindon.*

V. 39.—There is a kind of Pharisaic decorum and polite cleanness, which even the *unclean* spirit (Verse 24), allows in his victim, and takes pleasure in.—*J. Ford.*

V. 41.—What follows from the preceding words helps to explain this. It was before said, "Your inward parts are full of plunder, deceit, and wickedness;" He then adds, *Give alms of such things as ye have,* that is, as ye have obtained by those sins of plunder and avarice. Now this is what Zacchæus did. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore four-fold." We are therefore made clean from sins of this description in this manner, when it is in our power to make the compensation for them; not that this has any virtue in itself to our purifying, but first needs the Grace of God, and the Blood of Christ, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of all our sins, when, in regard to each, we "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance."—*S. Basil.*

"Such things, as ye have," as are *within* you, their "*inward part* being *full* of ravening and wickedness." Rom. iii. 13.—*J. Ford.*

It is Charity, which gives to all the rest of the Christian graces and moral duties both their efficacy and their lustre, as it is light, which restores to all animate and inanimate bodies both their form and colour. Unirradiated therefore by solar charity, all the other virtues lie lost, and undistinguished in the deep obscurity and gloom of earthly passions and appetites; which, though they may perhaps serve our own ease, or reputation here, or may even be of use to the community we live with, will never benefit us in procuring that happiness, which our holy Religion offers to all, that seek it, through the Love of God and man. 1 Cor. xiii.—*Bp. Warburton.*

V. 42.—*Not to leave, &c.* As it is one of the peculiar weaknesses of human nature, when, upon a comparison of two things, one is found to be of greater importance than the other, to consider this other, as of scarce any importance at all, it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves, how great presumption it is to make light of any institutions of Divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from Him, lay us under a Moral obligation to obey them; an obligation Moral in the strictest and most proper sense. Deut. iv. 2; S. Matt. v. 19.—*Bp. Butler.*

V. 43.—Christ's disciple loves the *uppermost place*

indeed, but at spiritual banquets, where he may feed on the choicest morsels of spiritual food; for, with the Apostles who "sit upon twelve thrones," he loves the *chief seats*, and he loves greetings made in the heavenly market place; that is, in the heavenly congregation of the primitive. S. John xiii. 23.—*Origen.*

V. 45.—It was the complaint of Salvian, many hundred years ago, that he could not speak against the vices of men, but one or other would thus object; "There he meant me;" "He hit me;" and so storm and fret. "Alas!" as he replieth, "it is not we, who speak to you, but your own conscience: we speak to the order; but conscience speaks to the person." 1 Kings xxii. 8.—*Flavel.*

V. 46.—The servile spirit, when pushed on by conscience to some acts of seeming devotion, is like Doeg "Detained before the Lord" (1 Sam. xxi. 7). But, the filial spirit is then in its proper element.—*Evans.*

Basil and S. Chrysostom, speaking of those, who preach only by their words, say, that they are not true preachers, but only comedians, who act their parts upon the stage, and are not the persons they represent. You represent humility very well in the exterior; you represent also very well the vanity of the things of the world, and the contempt, that ought to be had of them; but if you are not really humble, if you do not truly contemn whatsoever may any way separate you farther from God, you are not a preacher of the Gospel; you are a comedian, who only act your part. S. Gregory Nazianzen says, that those,

who preach not by their actions, as well as their words, draw souls to them with one hand, and drive them away with the other; they build with one hand, and pull down with the other; as the Scribes and Pharisees did. Woe be to those, who practise not what they say. Acts i. 1; Rom. ii. 17–29; Col. ii. 23.—*Alph. Rodriguez.*

V. 51.—*Which perished between the altar and the temple.* This circumstance was probably mentioned and charged against them, as the last finishing, and crowning, act to all their deeds of persecution and blood; that they murdered the servant of God in God's own House, even in His Holy Presence, adding open insult and the most desperate Sacrilege to the burden of their guilt. And this same circumstance, on the other hand, was the crown of joy and blessedness to the dying Martyr, that the ground, which drank in his blood, was Holy ground, and that he "fell asleep" what time he was ministering unto the Lord in the midst of His temple, the figure of that better Temple, "not made with hands, Eternal in the heavens." iii. 20—*J. Ford.*

V. 54.—Think upon every word, before you utter it; and remember how nature hath rampired up (as it were) the tongue with teeth, lips; yea, and hair without the lips; and all betokening reins or bridles for the loose use of that member. Prov. xv. 28; Job xxxii. 4–11.—*Sir H. Sydney.*

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 1.—*Hypocrisy* is not merely for a man to deceive others, knowing all the while that he *is* deceiving them, but to deceive himself, *and* others at the same time, to aim at their praise by a religious profession, without perceiving that he loves their praise more than God's, and that he is professing far more, than he practises. —*J. H. Newman.*

V. 4.—Fear no man's person in the doing of your duty wisely, and according to the Laws; remembering always that a servant of God can no more be hurt by all the powers of wickedness, than by the noise of a fly's wing, or the chirping of a sparrow. Rom. viii. 31; 1 S. Pet. iii. 12–16.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 5.—If an angry Providence should at any time smite a sinner in his nearest temporal concerns, we may, nevertheless, look upon such an infliction, how sharp soever, but as a drop of scalding water, lighting on his hand or foot: but, when God fastens the judgment on the spirit, or inner man, it is like scalding lead, poured into his bowels; it reaches him in the very centre of life: and when the centre of life is made the centre of misery too, they must needs be commensurate, and a man can no more shake off his misery, than he can himself. Prov. xviii. 14.—*Dr. South.*

V. 6.—The golden chain of Providence is let down from the throne of the Supreme, through all the ranks of animated and of unanimated nature ; guiding and governing every individual spirit, and every individual atom, by such mean, and in such a manner, as best comport with the dignity, the efficacy, the wisdom, and the love of Him, who holds the chain, and who has implicated every link. . . May we not say of His Providence, what the Psalmist says of the central luminary, round which our globe is wheeled, that there is "Nothing hid from the heat thereof?" Eph. iii. 6 ; Col. i. 17.—*Toplady.*

V. 8.—The word *confession* is not always to be understood in reference to our sins, but sometimes of our giving thanks to God. Rom. x. 10 ; xv. 9.—*S. Hilary.*

V. 9.—*Deny Me.* If we must give an account of every "idle word," take care, lest you have to answer for an idle silence. Ps. xl. 12 ; Col. iv. 6.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 10.—There are many sins against the Holy Ghost. The most horrible is that of blaspheming Him ; for this is a sort of high treason against the Majesty of heaven. Such a grievous sin the Scribes committed by a single saying ; but then they had long been ripening into such depravity, and never could have been guilty of it all at once. At S. Matt. ix. 10, 11, we may see something like the commencement of it. xi. 35.—*Bengel.*

Sin acquires a peculiar aggravation, when it can only be committed against God.—*S. Augustine.*

It is important to observe, that the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost is a sin of the tongue. As, on the one hand, our highest perfection is seen in our speech and conversation, so, on the other, the blaspheming tongue indicates the reprobate mind. In this sense, truly, it is "set on fire of hell," kindled by the author of all evil; so that they, who by their false and calumnious impieties, and against the dictates of their own consciences, would assail and overthrow the foundations of the Christian faith, are in very deed doing the devil's work, and are venturing near to the most awful precipice of that sin, which "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." Prov. xviii. 21; S. Matt. xii. 37; S. James iii.—*J. Ford.*

V. 13.—Wealth is a blessing, if God send it; a temptation, if man ask it. Ps. cvi. 15.—*Dr. Richard Clerke.*

Men misplace their discontent. They are very well satisfied with what they *are;* they are only dissatisfied with what they *have;* whereas the very reverse ought generally to take place; and the only desire, which we ought to set no bounds to, is that of increasing in godliness. Phil. iii. 12.—*J. Seed.*

V. 14.—With great propriety He declines interference with matters of this world, who came not down on their account; nor does He, who was the Judge of quick and dead, to whom belonged the final disposal of the souls of men, condescend to be an arbiter in men's contentions about their property. S. John xviii. 36.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 15.—*Take heed and beware.* He doubles His charge, that we should double our circumspection. Deut. x. 12, 20.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

Think you that great and rich persons live more content? Believe it not. If they will deal freely, they can but tell you the contrary; that there is nothing but a show in them, and that great estates and places have great grief and cares attending them, as shadows are proportioned to their bodies. Eccl. ii. 1–11.—*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 16.—There are more *parables,* I believe, in the New Testament against taking no thought about heavenly things, and taking too much thought about earthly things, than against any other fault whatsoever.—*Aug. Hare.*

V. 17.—The poor man's hand is the treasury of Christ. All my superfluity shall be there hoarded up, where I know it will be safely kept, and surely returned to me. Prov. xix. 17.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 18.—*Build greater.* To work our own contentment, we should not labour so much to increase our substance, as to moderate our desires.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

V. 19.—We must take care to use the good things of our prosperous days so, as to rejoice more in the goodness of God, that gives them, than in the good things themselves. . . The worldly man looks not to the Giver, but to the gift itself; and, on the other side, the good man adores the Giver more than the gift. The carnal man worships second causes; but the spiritual man gives all

honour to the first cause of all things. 2 Chr. xvii. 3; Ps. cxvi. 12–14.—*Bp. Bull.*

V. 20.—*But God said unto him.* What we say to ourselves, yea, what we plan and purpose in the most secret depths of our hearts, God hears, and observes, and answers. Ps. lxxxv. 8; Hos. xiv. 8.—*J. Ford.*

Death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us; and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases; and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse; and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind our graves. Ecclus. xiv. 18.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 21.—I do not remember that I ever read that any one, who abounded in acts of charity, and was "glad to distribute," died an evil death, or came to a bad end; for such a man hath many intercessors, and it is impossible that the prayers of many should not be granted. Ps. xli. 1–3; S. James v. 16.—*S. Jerome.*

A wise man will desire no more than what he may get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly.—*Lord Bacon.*

I love to love God; and I desire this love, not only as an evidence of my salvation, but for itself. I had much rather have a heart to love Him perfectly, than to have all the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this world. Ps. iv. 8; cxix. 72.—*Corbet.*

V. 22.—The *body* is but the husk or shell, the *soul* is the kernel; the body is but the cask, the soul the precious

liquor, contained in it; the body is but the cabinet, the soul the jewel; the body is but the ship or vessel, the soul the pilot; the body is but the tabernacle, and a poor clay tabernacle, or cottage, too, the soul the inhabitant; the body is but the machine or engine, the soul that internal something, that actuates and quickens it; the body is but the dark lanthorn, the soul or spirit is the candle of the Lord, that burns in it. And, seeing that there is such difference between the soul and body in respect of excellency, surely our better part challenges our greatest care and diligence, to make provision for it. . . Some philosophers will not allow the body to be an essential part of man, but only the vessel, or vehicle, of the soul. The soul is the man. Though I would not be so unequal to it, yet I must needs acknowledge it to be but an inferior part: it is therefore so to be treated, so dieted, and provided, as to render it most calm and compliant with the soul, most tractable and obsequious to the dictates of reason; not so pampered and indulged, as to encourage it to cast its rider, and to take the reins into its own hand, and usurp dominion over the better part, the presiding part, to sink and depress it into a sordid compliance with its own lusts, and bind to the earth a breath of the Divinity. Eccl. xii. 7; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Rom. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 27.—*Ray.*

V. 24.—The observation is common, that He instanceth in the *raven* rather, than in any other bird; because, of all other birds, the ravens are observed soonest to forsake their young ones. Whether the observation holds, or no, it serveth to my purpose howsoever: for, if God so

sufficiently provide for the young ravens, when the dams forsake them, will He not much more take care of us, when our fathers and mothers forsake us? Isa. xlix. 15. —*Bp. Sanderson.*

V. 27.—This must needs be a goodly flower, that our Saviour hath singled out to compare with Solomon; and that, not in his ordinary dress, but in all his Royalty: surely the earth had never so glorious a King, as he. . . O God, let it be my ambition to walk with Thee hereafter in white. Could I put on a robe of stars here with proud Herod, that glittering garment could not keep me from lice, or worms; might I sit on a throne of gold, within a house of ivory, I see I should not compare with this flower: I might be as transitory; I should not be so beautiful. What matters it, whether I go for a flower, or a weed, here? Whethersoever, I must wither. O Thou, which art "Greater than Solomon," do Thou clothe me with Thy perfect righteousness; so shall I flourish for ever in the courts of the house of my God. Acts xii. 21–23; Ps. xcii. 12; 1 S. Pet. i. 24, 25.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 28.—The world cannot show a more exalted character, than that of a truly religious philosopher, who delights to turn all things to the glory of God; who from the objects of his sight derives improvement to his mind, and in the glass of things temporal sees the image of things eternal. Let a man have all the world can give him (Verse 17), if he has a grovelling, unlettered, indevout mind; let him have his gardens, his fields, his woods, and his lawns, for grandeur, ornament, plenty, and gratification, while, at the same time, God is not in all his thoughts;

and let another have neither field nor garden; let him only look at nature with an enlightened mind, a mind, which can see and adore the Creator in His works, can consider them, as demonstrations of His power, His wisdom, His goodness, and truth—this man is greater, as well as happier in his poverty, than the other in his riches. The one is but a little higher than a beast, the other but a little lower than an Angel.—*Wm. Jones.*

V. 30.—Our Blessed Redeemer's way of speaking is extremely to be observed. *Your heavenly* Father *knoweth.* He doth not say, "God knoweth," or "the Lord knoweth," but *Your heavenly* Father, knows your wants, regards them with a parent's feelings. Is not the very expression full of consolation? xi. 2.—*Plain Sermons.*

Where are you now, you boasters of unprofitable sciences? What can your learned follies show, compared to these Divine conclusions? What can your finest wits produce, like these incomparable arguments? Take then away your painful trifles, and give me "the Words of Eternal Life." All, that your studies promise, is vanity; all, they perform, is vexation of spirit: here it is alone you must seek for solid truth, and here alone find rest to your souls. Phil. iv. 4–10.—*Austin.*

V. 31.—*Added* by way of overplus, and accession; as he, that buyeth a treasure of jewels, hath the cabinet into the bargain.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

As the Celestial benefits, though not openly tendered in the Jewish Law, were yet mystically couched therein, and closely designed for the spiritual and hearty practisers

of Religion, so is the collation of temporal accommodations to be understood to belong to all pious Christians. There is a codicil (as it were) annexed to the New Testament, in which God signifieth His intention to furnish His children with all that is needful, and convenient for them. —*Dr. Barrow.*

The way to obtain spiritual blessings is to be importunate for them; but the way to obtain temporal blessings is to be indifferent about them. Solomon had *wisdom* given him, because he asked it; and *wealth*, because he did not ask it. Ps. xxvii. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 31.—*M. Henry.*

V. 32.—Of all the gracious words, that ever proceeded from the lips of Incarnate Love, this may perhaps be accounted the most gracious. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Weigh every word here; keep every word, and ponder it in your heart. "Oh, taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is. Blessed is the man, that trusteth in Him." 2 S. Pet. i. 4.—*J. Ford.*

What God sold to Christ, He *gives* to us. Christ was the purchaser; believers are but heirs to what He has bought. Rom. vi. 23; viii. 17.—*Gurnall.*

It is not called *a* kingdom, but "*The* kingdom;" that kingdom, which alone is worth all the kingdoms, that the devil showed Christ—the kingdom of Heaven. 1 S. Pet. i. 4.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 33.—He is no fool (ver. 20), who parts with that, which he cannot keep, when he is sure to be recompensed with that, which he cannot lose. Heb. x. 34.—*P. Henry.*

Give alms, &c. We visit the sick, and the Spirit of comfort visits us; we serve our brethren, and the Angels minister unto us; we cover the naked with our cloth, and God covers us with joy; we convert a sinner, and shine as stars; we part with a few shekels of silver, and the hand of mercy works and turns them into a crown; we sow temporal transitory things, and the harvest is Eternity. While we make them ours, they are weak and impotent; but, when we part with them, they work miracles, and remove mountains, all, that is between us and blessedness. All the riches in the world will "not add one cubit unto our stature;" but, if we thus tread them under our feet, they will lift us up as high as Heaven. The best gains are those we purchase with our loss; and the best way to "find bread is to cast it upon the waters." S. Matt. xxv. 33, 40; Heb. vi. 10.—*Farindon.*

35.—The faithful servant abhors delay; he thinks not of to-morrow; he is a stranger to indolence; he outstrips his master's command by anticipating it; he gets ready his eyes for seeing, his ears for hearing, his tongue for speaking, his hands for working, his feet for journeying. He gathers together all his faculties, so as fully to perform his superior's will. Gen. xxii. 3; Ps. cxxiii. 2.—S. *Bernard.*

V. 36.—The watchful Christian is one, who would not be surprised, who would not be over agitated, if he found that Christ was coming at once. Few will thus *open immediately,* when He knocks. They will have something to do first; they will have to get ready. They will need time to collect themselves, and summon about them their

better thoughts and affections. Life is short; death is certain; and the world to come is everlasting. 2 Cor. v. 9.—*J. H. Newman.*

When Christ comes to take unto Himself His bride the Church, the bride chamber is decorated for Him; it is adorned with the rich gold of faith, the silver of wisdom, the jewels of grace, the veils of sanctity, the roses of bashfulness, the lilies of chastity, the violets of modesty. Nor are there wanting the dulcimers of Psalms, the loud toned pipes of prophecies, the voices of the Apostles, and all the choral harmony of heaven. Slave of sleep must he truly be, who is not roused by so sweet, and so loud a call, to attend the marriage of the Heavenly King. Ps. xlv. 8–17; S. Matt. xxv. 1–13.—*Pet. Chrysologus.*

V. 37.—There seems to be an antithesis intended here; intimating, that, if you *gird* yourselves in God's service now, He will hereafter *gird Himself*, for your eternal reward and entertainment. He will take off your ministering girdle, and put it on Himself. Excepting Ver. 32, and S. John xvii. 22, 23, this passage appears to contain wonders of Grace and Mercy, beyond all other exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel. 1 Cor. ii. 9.—*J. Ford.*

What a dining-room in the House of God is this! Who ever heard the like? The Lord to stand, the servant to sit down! The Lord to *gird Himself*, that He may be ready to wait; the servant to be ungirded, that he may recline at his ease! The Lord busied in supplying the refreshments, the servant quietly having the fruition of the Royal dainties! Oh, did we once consider and know

these things, how would all earthly attractions become vile in our esteem! What means the Lord's ministering unto them, but that all their sweet entertainments are treasured up in Himself? For He is the Bread of Life and the Fountain of Wisdom; He is the "hidden Manna, which no one knows, but he that has it." Therefore He passes from one to another of the guests, and supplies all with festive delights, which satisfy without cloying, and ever fill without wearying. S. John vi. 34.—*Bellarmine.*

V. 39.—When the Master of the vessel calls on board the passengers, he set on shore to refresh a little, they should be continually mindful of the ship and of the Master's summons, and leave their trifling and gathering cockle shells, nay, all impertinences whatever, mind the signal, and run to the ship. The warning is in general; but, if thou be a man in years, stray not too far, lest thou be left behind and lose thy passage. S. John xi. 28, 29. —*Epictetus.*

V. 42.—*He shall make him ruler over his household.* What is that? for he is so already: true; but he shall be much more. God will treat him, as Joseph was treated by his Master; he was first a steward, and then a Procurator, one that ruled his goods without account and without restraint. Our Ministry shall pass into Empire, our labour into rest, our watchfulness into fruition, and our bishoprick into a Kingdom. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20; 1 S. Pet. v. 4.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

I infer from this passage, first, that there are, under the Gospel, especial dispensers of the Christian's spiritual

food; in other words (if the word food may be interpreted from the parallel of the Sixth Chapter of S. John), dispensers of invisible Grace, or Priests; next, that they are to continue to the Church in every age till the end; for it is said, "Blessed is he, whom his Lord, *when He cometh*, shall find so doing;"—further, that the Minister mentioned is also *Ruler over His household*, as in the case of the Apostles, uniting the Regal with the Sacerdotal office;—lastly, the word *steward*, which incidentally occurs in the passage, a title applied by S. Paul to the Apostles, affords an additional reason for supposing, that other like titles, such as "Ambassadors of Christ," given to the Apostles, do also belong in a true and sufficient sense to their successors.—*J. H. Newman.*

Who then, &c. The form of an inquiry seems to intimate the difficulty of providing God's household with stewards, so qualified. As our Lord said of those, who "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth," "The Father *seeketh* such to worship Him," so Christ *seeketh* to have in His Church *faithful and wise stewards, &c.* Therefore, let the excellency of the Sacred office, and a deep sense of those rare qualifications, which must be found in our spiritual rulers, move us to seek the precious gift from heaven, to observe Ember weeks, and then, and at all times, to pray *the Lord of the harvest, that He should send forth* (such) *labourers into His harvest.* S. John iv. 23; Acts xiii. 2.—*J. Ford.*

V. 43.—We live in a world, which has so many sharp points and critical stations, that our own comfort, as well as that of those around us, is made to turn upon mutual

kindness, forbearance, accommodation, and dependence: in want of these, we are condemned to bear the lash of continued discord, and are made our own tormentors. Ps. lxviii. 6.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 46.—Let every man, in his first address to his actions, consider, whether, if he were now to die, he might safely and prudently do such an act: and whether he would not be infinitely troubled that death should surprise him in his present dispositions: and then let him act accordingly. 2 S. Pet. iii. 9–12.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 47.—What our Lord here couches under the Parable of the wicked servant, He hath expressly declared, without a figure, S. Matt. xxiii. 14; and xi. 22. Acts xvii. 30; S. John ix. 41; S. James iii. 1.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

We Christians live in the concentred light of all knowledge, human and Divine. Unto us are gathered all ages, and people, and nations, and languages. The heathen have ministered unto us; the Jews have ministered unto us; God Himself has made us the depositories of His own Word and Will. Heb. ii. 1–4.—*J. Miller.*

V. 48.—Ignorance will not excuse sin, when it is itself a sin. He, that falls into error for want of diligence and care to find out the truth, can have no pretence to pardon. We are as much bound to *know* our duty, as we are obliged to *practise* it.—*Palmer.*

V. 49.—*On the earth.* He intimates that He did not simply *will* this, but that His whole will was so absorbed in this object, as to exclude every other purpose, every

other desire, than that the fire of Divine love should be kindled in that very earth, to which it was once said; "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." xiii. 34.—*R. P. F. Hermannus.*

V. 50.—Christ calls His death a Baptism; so S. Augustine calls our Baptism a death: Baptism to us, he says, is our cross, and our passion, and our burial; that is, in that we are conformed to Christ, as He suffered, died, and was buried. Because, if we be so Baptized into His Name, and into His death, we are hereby "dead to sin," and have died the death of the righteous.—*Dr. Donne.*

How am I straitened? It has been forcibly observed by some one, that the "Salvation of Mankind was Christ's ruling passion."—*J. Ford.*

V. 51.—Is not the Church of Christ set forth unto us in the Scriptures, as a Militant Church, an army with banners? Rom. xii. 18. How then are we to "pursue peace?" Certainly, as Christ is set forth in the Scripture, as a "captain," a "leader," a "man of war," a "lion of the tribe of Judah," the victorious tribe (Ex. xv. 3), so is He a "Prince of Peace" too: honoured, at His birth, with the style of "Emmanuel," a name of peace; crowned in His Baptism with a dove, the emblem of peace; holding in His hand a sceptre, the Gospel of peace; being in the Temple a "corner-stone," the place of peace; coming into the world with a song of peace; going out of the world with a legacy of peace: in one word, a perfect Moses, the meekest man; and yet the mightiest warrior;

a true David, a man much versed in battle, and yet made up all of love; sending a sword in one place, and sheathing up a sword in another (S. Matt. x. 34; S. John xviii. 11); careless of offending in case of piety (S. Matt. xiii. 57), and tender of offending in case of liberty (S. Matt. xvii. 25–27), thus He. And thus His Church too; Salem, a place of peace; Jerusalem, a vision of peace; and yet therein a fort, and an armoury for shields and bucklers. Cant. iv. 4.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 57.—*Of yourselves.* Hence we have concluded, that those Moral lessons, which learned men among the Gentiles have stated in their books, as derived from the common feelings and dictates of nature, are no less Divine, than those, which we have now in the stony tablets of Moses. Nor, in truth, did our Heavenly Father desire us to esteem those Laws, which He wrote on the stone, in a higher degree than those other Laws, which He has engraved on the very feelings of our natural constitution. Acts xiv. 17; Rom. i. 19.—*Melancthon.*

It is a great mistake to suppose that the obligation of Moral duties doth depend solely upon the Revelation of God's Will, made to us in the Holy Scriptures.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

V. 58.—If thou sin, the word of God is thy *adversary.* It is the adversary of thy will, till it become the author of thy salvation. But, if thou maintain a good will to thine adversary, and *agree with him* (S. Matt. v. 25), instead of a judge shalt thou find a Father; instead of a cruel officer, an Angel taking thee into Abraham's bosom;

instead of a prison, a Paradise. How rapidly hast thou changed all things *in the way*, because thou hast "agreed with thine adversary!" 1 Cor. iv. 21; Gal. iv. 16.—*S. Augustine.*

True conversion consists in feeling that there is an invincible variance between God and us; and that, without a Mediator, there can be no communion. Micah vi. 6.—*Pascal.*

CHAPTER XIII.

V. 1.—Our Saviour's discourse, immediately before, was of "the signs of the times," and a tax of His auditors' dulness in "not discerning" them. This unexpected intersertion of those *Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices,* whatsoever the news-mongers intended, was indeed no interruption, but rather an illustration of His doctrine: it comes in its right cue; and the relators of this sad accident serve His turn as fitly, as the Chirurgion doth the Physician, by making a visible dissection of that part, on which the other makes an anatomy-lecture. The implication, or importance of the news, thus suited by Divine Providence unto the point, then handled by our Saviour, is in effect as much, as if he Himself had said unto his auditors—If you want other signs of the time to meditate upon, take these two for your theme, the unusual massacre of the Galileans, and the disaster of those eighteen inhabitants of Jerusalem, *upon whom the tower in Shilo fell and slew them.* These are the first drops of God's displeasure against the nation; but these drops, without repentance, will grow into a current, and the current into a river, and the river swell into a flood, and the flood into an ocean of public woe, and tragick miseries. Jer. viii. 6, 7; xxvi. 2; S. Matt. xxiv. 8.—*Dr. Jackson.*

V. 2.—It was the practice of our Blessed Saviour to notice in His discourses the passing events of the day, to

take advantage of the lively interest, which they occasioned in men's minds, and by such means to facilitate the introduction of some appropriate spiritual lesson. Thus, as a man, He drew His hearers "by the cords of a man," meeting them on the common ground of human life, appealing to their hopes and fears, and so conducting them by gentle steps from nature to Grace, from earth to Heaven, from things temporal to things Eternal. The vast universal importance of the necessity of Repentance, as here insisted on, has perhaps had the effect of withdrawing our attention from the passage, as it contains an exact Prophecy of two remarkable circumstances, which attended the destruction of Jerusalem; the slaughter of vast multitudes in the Temple, and the many deaths caused by the falling towers of the devoted city. Isa. xxxii. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Heb. xiii. 17.—*J. Ford.*

The way to advance in Christian perfection is to make Christian reflections upon every occurrence of life, and to endeavour to improve them.—*Bp. Wilson.*

The far more precious blood of our souls is *mingled with our sacrifices*, whensoever we are guilty before God, even before His more immediate Presence in His House of Prayer, of irreverence, of hypocrisy, or of profaneness. He, who was "a murderer from the beginning," slays us on holy ground. We find death in the very place, where we should have found Life. The gate of Heaven becomes unto us the very door of hell. x. 15; Ps. lxix. 23; Heb. xii. 28, 29.—*J. Ford.*

V. 3.—Repentance is not merely an act, but a habit; it consists in a total change in the tone and character of a

man. It is a turning away from all sin, upon the settled conviction of the understanding, that it is wrong; that it is opposed to the holy nature and righteous Law of God. Repentance is a holy determination of the will, a holy bias of the affections, a hatred of iniquity, an humble mind, a tender conscience, a contrite spirit, a habit of penitential sorrow, because we have sinned against the most high God. Repentance implies all this, and much more. Hos. xiv. 8; Rom. vi. 21.—*R. Cecil.*

Some people do not like to hear much of Repentance; but I think it so necessary, that, if I should die in the pulpit, I should desire to die preaching Repentance; and, if I should die out of the pulpit, I should desire to die practising it. S. Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17.—*P. Henry.*

V. 4.—God punishes some sinners here, to show, that there is a just Judge; and He leaves others unpunished, to show there is a Judgment to come.—*Abp. Bramhall.*

It was not an extravagance of humility therefore, I should think, but a sound calculation, or a natural feeling, which once made a distinguished moralist, when he saw one of his fellow creatures under the extreme sentence of the law, express his thankfulness, that he had escaped the fall and fate, to which he was perhaps in himself as liable, as the guilty sufferer. Rom. iii. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 7.—*Davison.*

V. 6.—The owner of *the vineyard* and of the *fig tree,* planted in it, as the best interpreters agree, doth represent God the Father, or First Person in Trinity. He it is, that exacts satisfaction for all sins, committed against the Deity, or Divine Nature; and He it is, which demands

fruit of whatsoever the Divine Nature hath planted; that is, thankfulness of man in special, for His benefits bestowed upon him, but, especially, of His Church, wheresoever planted. By the dresser of the vineyard, ye are to understand the Son of God, or Second Person in Trinity. For he it is, which took our Nature upon Him, to till and dress it for His Father's service; and that portion of our nature, which He took upon Him, is as the root or stem to all the residue, which shall be freed from cursing. So our Saviour tells us, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman," or, the owner of the Vine. It is, again, the Son of God, or Second Person in Trinity, which doth mediate betwixt God and man; and, by His mediation and intercession, our first parents (the whole nature of man) were reprieved from death. S. John xv. 1.—*Dr. Jackson.*

V. 7.—Remember, O my soul, the fig tree was charged, not with bearing noxious fruit, but no fruit. Yea, the barren fig tree bare the fruit of annoyance; *Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground.* Vain thoughts do this ill in my heart, that they do no good. A vain thought engrosseth all the ground of my heart; till that be rooted out, no good meditation can grow with it, or by it. S. Matt. xxv. 30.—*T. Fuller.*

V. 9.—What was ever so patient and long-suffering, what so full of goodness, as the method of Almighty God's proceedings with sinners! Men offend God, and yet they are suffered to live; they multiply their offences against Him, and yet He prolongs their days; they blaspheme His Majesty and deny His Providence, and yet

He "causes His sun to shine, and His rain to fall upon the evil as well as the good." He calls them every way to amendment, by lengthening out the space of repentance, by good sermons, good books, good advice, by secret checks, and motions, by the rod of correction, by comforts and encouragements. Oh, how sweet, how wonderful, is the patience and mercy of this good God! But, take heed, O man, that thou abuse not this goodness. He designs by this to bring thee to a change of life; and still thou criest; "It is no matter to-day; to-morrow I will consider of it:" and, when to-morrow comes, "Well, it is time enough yet, another day will do as well:" and thus thou triflest away the Day of Grace, till the wrath of God rush upon thee unawares, and thou perish by His justice, whose kindness thou hast despised. Wisd. xi. 23, &c.; Rom. ii. 4.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 11.—He, who has truly received those words, *Sursùm corda*, "Lift up your hearts," has not his back bowed down; for, in an erect posture he looks for the hope, laid up for him in Heaven. . . But they, who have no such hope of a future life, as blinded men, think only of things below; and this is to have the back bowed down—that infirmity, from which the Lord loosed the woman. Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 1, 2.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 13.—In the healing of this woman, our Lord did five things. He compassionately *saw* her; He *called* her; He *healed* her; He *touched* her; and He *lifted her up.* Thus does He also perfectly cure a sinful soul. He sees it, in His compassion; He calls it, by His internal inspiration; He heals it, by remitting its sins; He

touches it, by the afflictive chastenings of His hand. He raises it up to things above, in the warmth of Divine love.—*Ludolphus.*

V. 14.—The precept, concerning the observance of the Sabbath, is a Moral precept, so far as it regards that, which natural reason suggests, namely, that man should assign *some* portion of his time to religious contemplation; but the prescription of a *certain set* time for this rest is not one of the dictates of the Law of nature, and therefore is no Moral precept. xii. 57.—*T. Aquinas.*

V. 15.—*Loosed—be loosed.* How gracious is the Parable, and yet how entirely to the point! He compares one yoke with another; that the hypocrisy of the Jews may be reproved by their own act. . . These Jews were not hurt at the violation of the Sabbath, but at the glory, Christ gained by this miracle.—*S. Ambrose.*

Man is obliged to be servant to the brutes. Surely there is a meaning in this. God intends it for our humility: for it may remind us how the fall has abased us. xv. 15.—*Bengel.*

Not only the cure itself, but His manner of working it, manifestly witnesseth that He, which wrought it, was that *Lord,* in whose praise the Psalmist conceived that song (Ps. cxlvi). For, He did not cure her, as a messenger sent from God, or as a minister of delegated power or authority, but by word of Majesty, as Lord and Author of the health, which He bestowed upon her—*Woman, thou art loosed, &c.* Besides the exact correspondence between

the Psalmist's words ("The Lord raiseth up them that are *bowed down*"), and the Evangelist's description of the party cured (as that *she was bowed together*, &c.), there is another point very remarkable in the character and phrase of the Evangelist. For, in the beginning of this relation, he saith, "when *Jesus* saw her, He said unto her" (that was before she was healed), but, when he relates our Saviour's reply unto the Ruler of the Synagogue (after she was healed), he doth not say, "Jesus then answered him, and said," but "*The Lord* then answered him and said;" as if he himself had conceived, and would lead us into the same truth, that this very fact had sufficiently manifested, that *Jesus*, whom the people took for a Prophet, to be that very *Lord*, of whom that Psalm was literally meant, and in whom this clause of "*raising up those, that were bowed down*," was at this time, and not before, punctually fulfilled.—*Dr. Jackson.*

V. 16.—*A daughter of Abraham* may be *bound by Satan for eighteen years*, and then loosed from her bondage. Take comfort from this, ye long oppressed and most despairing Christians, who are "tied and bound" under a painful sense of your sins; yea, believe, that it is "because ye are *sons* and *daughters*, ye are therefore made to suffer." S. John v. 5; Rom .viii. 17; Heb. xii. 8.—*J. Ford.*

V. 19.—The improvement of the Church is compared to husbandry, and sowing of seed: it is not to-day seed-time and to-morrow harvest; but, "first, the blade, then, the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear;" then

comes harvest. It was sown in promises, sprung up in prophecies, bloomed in types and figures; then came the full ear and harvest in Christ's Incarnation. The joy of that time is "the joy of harvest." S. Mark iv. 28; Isa. ix. 3.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 21.—Cultivate, O Lord, the seed, Thou hast sown in our hearts; that our faith may quicken into love, and both together shoot forth into fruitful works; and all our weary thoughts come and rest themselves under the shadow of their branches. For by Thy gracious influence every small endeavour is blest with a great increase. We, of ourselves, are a lifeless lump; but Oh, infuse Thy Spirit into our souls, and conserve it there in an humble secresy, till it begin to work, and ferment, and spread by degrees over all our powers; that we may know, and relish, and with thankfulness receive those blessed secrets, which, having been so long kept secret, are now by Thy own mouth revealed to us. Ps. cxix. 25.—*Austin.*

V. 23.—It is possible, nay, it is very common, for men to dispute, and with no small earnestness, on certain questions, which are called religious, but which have no sort of reference to themselves: for instance, they inquire, whether any of the heathen can be saved, and in what manner; but not, whether they themselves are in a state of salvation? Much more wisely did the jailer ask, "What must *I* do to be saved?" . . Every question is interesting exactly in that degree, in which it affects ourselves: this question alone we prefer to hear discussed in a general and abstracted manner: and the reason is

this, that, if this question come near to ourselves, we are afraid of certain painful conditions. Brethren, why should you speak, or think of these things, only in a general way? Why not apply your knowledge to a practical purpose? Why not turn the edge of your argument upon yourselves? Do you suppose, that God loves you in the crowd of mankind, because you love yourself in it? And, when you die, will you not die alone? Then inquire, in simplicity and integrity of heart, as one, who is alone with God, What must *I* do? And thus show your readiness to comply with the conditions of salvation. S. John iv. 19, 20; 1 Tim. i. 4–7.—*H. Martyn.*

V. 24.—Most men take least notice of what is plain, as if that were of no use; but they puzzle their thoughts and lose themselves in those vain depths and abysses, which no human understanding can fathom. Isa. lv. 2.—*Dean Sherlock.*

If my religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship, which are in fashion, where I live; if it cost me no pain or trouble; if it lays me under no rules and restraint, if I have no careful thoughts and sober reflections about it, is it not great weakness to think, that I am *striving to enter in at the strait gate?* Prov. xiv. 12; 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.—*Wm. Law.*

It is one thing to *strive* to enter in, in a Scriptural way; and another to *seek* to enter in, by a way of our own invention. . . If we ask persons, in this great commercial city, why such a man does not succeed in the

object, he is pursuing, they will answer; because he does not take the right means. We should use much prayer and caution, that we do not enter into by-paths, which may be known by their appearing more easy and smooth, when perhaps the right path is painful and rough. Rom. ix. 31.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 27.—*Thou hast taught in our streets.* Whilst I walk the streets, let my head and heart be full of my Saviour. Consider how He walked the *streets* of Jerusalem; how modestly and plainly He was apparelled; how little He coveted to make a figure; how little to see, or to be seen; how meek and humble His behaviour was. (S. John i. 36, "As He walked—the Lamb.")—*Bonnell.*

V. 30.—It is not, we see, prophesying in Christ's Name, (or preaching about Him) nor frequent attendance upon those, who do so: nor speaking much, nor hearing much, concerning Him; it is not having great gifts of endowments, conferred by Christ (not even so great, as that of working miracles); it is not familiar converse with Christ, or making frequent addresses to Him, that can sanctify a man's actions, or so entitle them to the Name of Christ, as to secure his person from being disavowed and rejected by Christ: it is only the conforming all our actions to His holy Laws, that can assure us to be acknowledged and accepted by Him. 1 Cor. xiii. 1–3.—*Dr. Barrow.*

V. 29.—Oh, how much better is it to *strive* for this entrance through a narrow gate, where, after thou hast

borne a little trouble and labour, thou wilt find the sweetest rest and everlasting pleasure! Could men escape the straits of the gate, and the pains of hell, both together, there might be some apology for their neglect, from their frailty, who durst never adventure here to force an entrance; but, when there is the absolute necessity, either with violent efforts to put forth ourselves for a while, or else fall into labours and dolours, that will eternally endure; Oh, where is the judgment, and the sense, if, to avoid some lesser and shorter straits, we throw ourselves under such, as are the most heavy and intolerable, out of which there will be no escaping? . . They, that here were deaf to the Lord's call, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate,* will hereafter find Him deaf to their cry; Lord, Lord, *open to us!* Oh, then, if ever we will be wise, let us consult our true interest, while time serves. Let us do that now, when we *may,* which doubtless we would with all our heart *desire,* that we had done, when we *cannot* do it. Prov. i. 24-32.—*Bellarmine.*

V. 33.—No better armour, Lord, against the darts of death, than to be busied in Thy service. "Why art thou so heavy, O my soul?" No malice of men can antedate my end a minute, whilst my Maker hath any work for me to do. And, when all my daily task is ended, why should I grudge then to go to bed? Job vii. 1; Rev. xi. 7.—*T. Fuller.*

Out of Jerusalem. Where Herod has no rule, but Pilate governs, My death then is not in his power, neither as to time, nor to place. I well know when I

must die: he does not. I well know the place of My death: he does not.—*Ludolphus.*

V. 34.—All creation, and every part of it, is more or less (and perhaps originally more than now), a copy or resemblance of God; a manifestation of His nature and operations; the instrument of His goodness; executioner of His justice; or a monitor of man's duty. The degenerate creature man in his present capability of the Divine likeness; the several tribes of brutes, in their formation, qualities, acts, and instincts; the inanimate parts of the creation, in their attractions, processes, and offices; all are something, and speak something, of God, in the universal language of nature. The sun, for instance, to say nothing of its nature as fire, is a lively emblem of God's universal operative Presence; and our Saviour's saying, *How often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!* is an affecting illustration of the Divine affection, and His own yearning compassion, in the fond workings of that creature. But who, in this dark state of things, can trace the thought in its full extent, or discover the resemblance, ends, and uses of but a few particulars? This will be the delightful employment of Glorified spirits, and the growing wonder of Eternity. Isa. xlix. 15, 16; Ps. ciii. 8–13.—*Adam.*

Under her wings. It is nature, that teacheth a wise man in fear to hide himself. But grace and faith doth teach him, where. Where should the frighted child hide his head, but in the bosom of his loving father? Where a Christian, but under the shadows of the wings of Christ, his Saviour? Isa. xxvi. 20.—*Hooker.*

Ye would not. There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing, that fights against Him, but Self-will. This is the strong castle, that we all keep garrisoned against heaven in every one of our hearts, which God continually layeth siege unto; and it must be conquered and demolished, before we can conquer heaven. It was by reason of this self-will, that Adam fell in Paradise, that those glorious Angels, those morning stars, "kept not their first station," but dropped down from heaven, like falling stars, and sunk into this condition of bitterness, anxiety, and wretchedness, in which now they are. They all entangled themselves with the lengths of their own wings; they would needs will more and otherwise, than God would will in them; and, going about to make their wills wider, and to enlarge them into greater amplitude, the more they struggled, they found themselves the faster pinioned, and crowded up into narrowness and servility; insomuch that now they are not able to use any wings at all, but, inheriting the serpent's curse, can only creep with their bellies upon the earth. Now our only way to recover God and happiness again is not to soar up with our understandings, but to destroy this self-will of ours; and then we shall find our wings to grow again, our plumes fairly spread, and ourselves raised aloft into the free air of perfect Liberty, which is perfect Happiness. 2 Cor. x. 5; Ps. cxix. 32.—*R. Cudworth.*

V. 35.—How sad, that a Deliverer (Rom. xi. 26) should come, and that we should be found incapable of being delivered; a Saviour for others, but not for us; a Saviour for pious Jews, and "desiring" Gentiles, but no

Saviour for us, who are "called by His Name." S. Matt. xiii. 7; Rev. vii. 9.—*J. Ford.*

It may be, that this may be the last instance, and the last opportunity, that ever God will give thee to exercise any virtue, to do Him any service, or thyself any advantage. Be careful that thou losest not this; for to eternal ages this shall never return again. Eccl. ix. 10; Rev. xxii. 12.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 1.—If it be allowed lawful to open our houses to our friends and neighbours, on the Lord's Day in acts of hospitality—provided always that neither we, nor our servants, are thereby hindered in the peculiar Sacred duties of that holy Day—how much more lawful is it to open our hearts to our needy brethren in acts of charity? We may indeed say, that whatever we offer to God on this Day shall have a double acceptance at His hands, and that our Public Worship is never more blessed, than when in private we visit "the fatherless and widows" in their afflictions, and bring words and deeds of *healing* to the sick and broken-hearted. xiii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 2.—*J. Ford.*

Our Lord studiously and designedly selected, rather than avoided the Sabbath day for the performance of His miracles of mercy. The five distinct instances recorded were probably but a few out of many. Add to which, that they seemed, humanly speaking, to cause offence; which our Lord would have avoided, were it not for some great purpose or principle. vi. 7.—*Is. Williams.*

V. 7.—*The chief rooms.* With great propriety, having cured the dropsy of the body, does he proceed to cure the spiritual dropsy; which is twofold, the swelling of pride, and the thirst for riches.—*Grotius.*

V. 8.—The three sources of ill manners are pride, ill-nature, and want of sense; so that every person, who is already endowed with humility, good nature, and good sense, will learn good manners with little or no teaching. Christianity is the best foundation of what we call good manners; and of two persons, who have equal knowledge of the world, he, that is the best Christian, will be the best gentleman. 1 Cor. xiii. 5.—*Wm. Jones* (of Nayland).

V. 10.—*Friend.* Be courteous of gesture and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence, according to the dignity of the person. There is nothing, that winneth so much with so little cost.—*Sir Henry Sidney.*

Now what Christ commanded others, He Himself did; for, when He came into this world, He reclined in the manger; and He died, reclining on a cross. Neither at His birth, nor at His death, could He find any more lowly place. 2 Cor. viii. 9.—*Bellarmine.*

The humble man never falls. For, whence should he fall, who is already below all? Self-elevation is a great abasement; but self-abasement is a great exaltation, and honour, and dignity. Isa. ii. 10–17.—*Macarius.*

Of them that sit &c. In the passage in the Old Testament, on which our Lord's words are grounded, it is, "In the presence of the Prince, whom thine eyes have seen;" but in His infinite condescension, He brings forward the presence of others, His creatures, in the application of it, and not His own. For speaking indeed of Himself, on such occasions, He says, "He shall come forth and serve them." Prov. xxv. 7; Heb. v. 5.—*Is. Williams.*

V. 11.—Humility, which is obtained by *humiliation*, is the foundation of the whole spiritual building. For humiliation is as truly the way to humility, as patience is to peace, or reading to knowledge. If you thirst after humility, do not shrink from humiliation, which is the way to it. For if you cannot stoop to humiliation, you will never be able to rise to humility. S. John xiii. 14, 15.—*S. Bernard.*

The grace of humility is the ornament of our relation both with God and man. It belongs to all times and places; it becomes the social meal on earth, and is the peculiar grace of the guests, exalted to the marriage feast in Heaven. It is the first among the Beatitudes. Like charity, "it never faileth" (1 Cor. xiii); but accompanies the Christian into glory, where, in its highest and continual exercise, it will be "made perfect." 1 S. Pet. v. 5; Rev. iv. 10.—*J. Ford.*

V. 12.—The scope of Christ here is not to forbid *neighbours* and *friends* feasting of one another, as a sin; for He alloweth it, as other necessary intercourses of human society; but He showeth, that such feastings in no wise avail to obtain any reward in Heaven. Therefore, He saith not, "lest it be sin unto thee," but *lest they bid thee again:* as in another place, "If ye be friendly to those, that are friendly to you, what reward have ye?" S. Matt. v. 46.—*Bede.*

V. 14.—Our Lord by no means deters us from acting with a view to some recompense. He only proposes to us one, that is Eternal, in preference to one, merely

temporal; one from God, instead of one from man. If we feast the rich, we have our recompense in the returning dinner, given by the rich. If we feast the poor, we have "a reward in Heaven" from the hands of Him, who has condescended to identify Himself with their low and helpless estate. vi. 32–35; S. Matt. xxv. 45.—*J. Ford.*

What is the peculiar character of the precepts laid down in the New Testament, in consequence of which they do not pass away, like the ordinances of the Law of Moses, but spread from land to land, and are handed down from generation to generation, and, wherever the Gospel is known, serve as a guide of life and practice to all classes and conditions of mankind? Their peculiar character is, that the Apostles, doing, as their Master had done before them, when they gave a *rule* for what was to be done in any case, or on any occasion, were not satisfied with giving the bare rule, but to the rule added *the principle*,* which was the ground of its wholesomeness and worth. . . Having given us this much, having given us the seeds of all rules, He has left us in great measure to grow the rules for ourselves; He has left us to apply the principles to particular cases, and so draw the rules for each case out of them. xix. 10; S. Mark ii. 27; Rom. xiv. 7–9; 1 Cor. vii. 19, 29; Col. iii. 1.—*A. W. Hare.*

There is no place, where we may so safely lay up our treasures, as in the hands of the poor. Prov. xix. 17.—*S. Chrysostom.*

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* The *principle* here would be, "Seek ye first the kingdom of *heaven*;" the *rule* would be, *Call the poor, &c.*

V. 15.—God hath given thee an Eternal inheritance, assured by an holy Covenant, made in the Word of God, signed with the Blood of His Son, and sealed with His Spirit and Sacraments. This shall be thine Eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven, where thy life shall be a Communion with the Blessed Trinity; thy joy, the presence of the Lamb; thy exercise, singing; thy ditty, Hallelujah; thy consorts, Saints and Angels; where youth flourisheth, that never waxeth old; beauty lasteth, that never fadeth; love aboundeth, that never wasteth; health continueth, that never slacketh; and life remaineth, that never endeth. Ps. xvi. 12; 1 Cor. ii. 9.—*Bp. Baily.*

V. 18.—The philosopher, who professes to be engaged in the investigation of truth, or the scholar, who can discover new beauties in the pages of heathen classical literature by his powers of criticism, are disposed to leave this question to the consideration of vulgar minds. The tradesman has no time for acquainting himself accurately with the way of Salvation; but leaves it to the Clergy, whose business it is to consider it. The poor man excuses himself from learning the way to be saved, because he has never been taught to read, or has no faculties or opportunity for learning. But the time will come to the scholar, when his reading must be at an end, and his books put up; and then his taste, and his learning, and refinement, will but poorly supply the want of the knowledge of the way of Salvation: the time is coming to the tradesman, when his accounts must close, and his speculations be over; and then it will be of little

consequence to him to know, how a fortune is to be raised, if he does not know how the soul may be saved. And to the poor man, the hour is hastening, when he will find it very hard to understand the nature of that Gospel, of which he learnt nothing in the course of his former life. S. John vi. 27; Heb. ii. 3.—*H. Martyn.*

V. 19.—There is no harm in saying, *I have bought five yoke of oxen, &c.*, if we do not add thereto, *I pray thee have me excused.* But how soon do we learn to call things by wrong names, and so to cheat and deceive our own souls, because "we love to have it so!" Sallust notices this feature in the licentious times of Catiline; "We have lost the practice of calling things by their proper names." We hear men talking of their anxious worldly cares, as duties, that must be attended to; of their needless superfluities, as necessary comforts, befitting their station in life; of their worldly amusements, as being necessary recreation. In the meantime, God is forgotten; this world becomes all in all; and the gracious Voice, which alone can save, is heard in vain; for "other Lords have got the dominion over us." Is. xxxii. 5; Eph. v. 6. —*J. Ford.*

V. 20.—When Grace and Life appear, and make proffer of themselves, all our carnal affections, like them in the Gospel, *join all with one consent to make excuses.* Nothing in our whole lives we are so solicitous for, as to get off fairly, to have made a cleanly apology to the invitations of God's Spirit; and yet, for a need, rather than go, we will venture to be unmannerly: we have all *married a wife,* espoused ourselves to some amiable delight or other;

we *cannot*, we will not *come*. Zeph. iii. 2; Jer. iii. 1–8. —*Dr. Hammond.*

Above them all, this married man was the worst; here was neither wit, nor manners. He not only answers churlishly in a blunt carelessness, *I cannot come;* but injuriously on Wedlock lays the necessity of his absence. . . Sure, he takes the Text in too large a sense, that, because it says, "A man shall leave all and cleave to his wife," that therefore he shall leave God. It is but the father and mother on earth, and not the Father of Heaven, that for her we may forsake. 1 Cor. vii. 33.—*O. Feltham.*

V. 21.—*Showed his lord these things.* There are four things, which I would not have for all the world against me—the Word of God, my own conscience, the prayers of the poor, and the account of godly Ministers.—*P. Henry.*

Because the rich were so absorbed in their lands, oxen, and wives, that they cared not for His entertainment, He calls the *poor*, that had not money wherewith to buy lands, or oxen, nor the means of marrying, when they were not able to maintain wives. He calls also the *infirm*, that could not go abroad, &c. . . How these, that were freed from all such impediments, as detained the others, when admitted to the great Supper, might congratulate even their infirmities, and find cause to bless the Lord, whose Will it was, that they should be poor, and weak, and blind, and lame! . . Never let us repine at the Providence of God, even when it is lowest and hardest with us in the world. God may be kindest to us, even when He seems to deal sharpest with us. vii. 22; xvi. 25; Rom. viii. 18.—*Bellarmine.*

V. 23.—*That my house may be filled.* For I would fain know, whether those texts, which declare God to be an Universal lover of the souls of men, be not far more numerous and plain, than those, which seemingly restrain His affections to a small select number, and reprobate all the rest of mankind. And if it be so, as I think no modest man can deny, how can this doctrine be deduced from Scripture without forcing the far greater number of Texts to subscribe to the smaller; and the plainer to the obscurer? Which is contrary to the most necessary rules of interpretation, and which, if pursued, will open a wide door to the grossest and most fulsome errors in religion. Wherefore, to secure our minds from false apprehensions of God, it is necessary, that, in consulting the Scriptures concerning Him, we should follow the plain and general drift of it, and not entertain any opinion of Him upon the credit of a few, or of obscure texts, which more, or plainer, ones seemingly contradict. S. John iii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 S. Pet. iii. 9.—*Dr. J. Scott.*

V. 24.—If we dread God's displeasure, if we value our Lord and His benefits, if we tender the life, health, and welfare, of our souls, we shall not neglect it; for how can we but extremely offend God by so extreme rudeness, that when He kindly invites us to His Table, we run from Him; that, when He with His own hand offereth us inestimable mercies and blessings, we reject them? And how can we bear any regard to our Lord, or be anywise sensible of His gracious performances in our behalf, if we are unwilling to join in thankful and joyful commemoration of them? How little do we love our

own souls, if we suffer them to pine and starve for want of that food, which God here dispenseth for their sustenance and comfort; if we bereave them of enjoying so high a privilege, so inestimable a benefit, so incomparable pleasures, as are to be found and felt in this service, or do spring and flow from it? What reasonable excuse can we frame for such neglect? Are we otherwise employed? What business can there be more important, than serving God and saving our own souls? Is it wisdom, in pursuance of any the greatest affairs here, to disregard the principal concern of our souls? Prov. i. 20–23.—*Dr. Barrow.*

V. 25.—Our Lord here adopted a method of teaching the community; such, as He had before applied to an individual. The young ruler came *running;* here *great multitudes* crowd after Jesus. Both are met with words of caution; the outward zeal and plausible show of religion is put to the test; and that test how severe! Refer to viii. 4.—*J. Ford.*

V. 26.—Christ doth not here make a perfect enumeration of all the objects, which we ought for His sake *to hate*, or, which is all one, to love less, than we love Him; but He reckons up such only, as it is most reasonable, and most natural, and most usual for us, to love; and, by peremptorily requiring us to love Him, more than these, doth much more exact of us that we should prefer Him to all other objects, which, being much less amiable than these, ought much less to come in competition with that love of Christ, which admits not even these to be loved, in comparison of Him. Ps. lxxiii. 25.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

We are preparing for another state of existence, where the relations of parents and children, husband and wife, will be known no more. We shall be brought into a nearer relation to God Himself; and for that, some appropriate discipline is necessary here. xx. 35.—*H. Martyn.*

V. 27.—*Omnis Christianus est Crucianus.* Every Christian is a Cross-bearer.—*Luther.*

These words (v. 26, 27), may be called the Christian's indenture; every one, that would be Christ's servant, must seal to this, before he hath leave from Christ to call Him, "Master:" wherein you see the chief provision Christ makes is about suffering work. S. John xiii. 13; Rom. viii. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 11–14.—*Gurnall.*

The sublimest philosophy, that ever was, did never drive man out of himself for a remedy, did never teach man to "deny himself;" but to build up his house with the old ruins, to fetch stones and materials out of the wonted quarry. Gal. iv. 15.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 28.—When we resolve inconsiderately, we resolve we know not what, and our resolution includes a thousand particulars, that we are not aware of, most of which, being repugnant to our vicious inclinations, will, when we come to practise them, be attended with such difficulties, as will easily startle our weak resolution, which, having not a sufficient foundation of reason to support it, will never be able to out-stand those boisterous storms of temptation, whereunto it will be continually exposed. If, therefore, we mean our resolution should hold out, and

commence a living principle of goodness, we must found it on a thorough consideration both of the duties and difficulties of religion, and of the motives, which should engage us to embrace it; we must set before our minds all the sins, we must part with, and all the duties, we must submit to; and fairly represent to ourselves all the difficulties and temptations, wherewith we must engage; and, as much as in us lies, render them actual and present to us, by supposing ourselves already engaged in our spiritual warfare, and surrounded with all the temptations, both from within and without, that we can reasonably expect will oppose themselves against us. ix. 42, 62; Ecclus. ii. 1–3; vii. 36; Prov. iv. 23–27.—*Dr. J. Scott.*

The good seed in the parable of the sower, that hath *depth of earth*, represents those persons, that seriously and profoundly consider. ii. 19, 51; vi. 48.—*Dr. Goodman.*

V. 29.—Perfect your salvation; be not Christians by halves, but go through with it. "Work *out*," (Phil. ii. 12). The thorough Christian is the true Christian.—*Gurnall.*

Be not unstable in thy resolutions, nor various in thy actions, nor inconstant in thy affections. So deliberate, that thou mayest resolve; so resolve, that thou mayest perform; so perform, that thou mayest persevere. Mutability is the badge of infirmity. Rom. viii. 18; Acts xx. 18–24.—*F. Quarles.*

V. 31.—The spiritual war admits of no intermission. It knows no night, no winter. It abides no peace, no

truce. It calls us not into garrison, where we may have ease and respite, but into pitched fields continually. We see our enemies in the face always, and are always seen and assaulted, ever resisting, ever defending, receiving and returning blows. If either we be negligent, or weary, we die: what other hope is there, while one fights, and the other stands still? We can never have safety and peace, but in victory. Then must our resistance be courageous and constant, when both yielding is death, and all treaties of peace mortal. Isa. ix. 5; Ps. cxliv. 1.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 33.—*Whosoever of you.* (*Any man,* ver. 26). One ground of practical unbelief is, that generalities can be cheaply believed, without parting with any thing we prize. But particular application is very difficult. This is a "bloody" word, as Moses' wife counted the Circumcision; too harsh and rough to be received with such pampered fleshy hearts.—*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 34.—He told His Apostles, that this self-denial (ver. 33) was peculiarly necessary for them, because it was the spiritual *salt,* that would preserve them from apostacy, and others from corruption; as it would not only enervate the temptation, to which they were exposed; but its beauty, appearing with great lustre in their behaviour, would allure others to become disciples and true subjects of His kingdom. Acts ii. 45; iv. 33–37.—*Dr. Macknight.*

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 2.—For according to a Jewish tradition, yet extant in their writings, it is reckoned as one of the six scandals, that those higher Orders of religionists are charged by all means to avoid; namely, to dine, eat, or drink, with such (persons of known bad character). Now this seems to be the first occasion of quarrel against our Saviour; that He, pretending to be some extraordinary person, at least a student of the Law, did not use such branded persons with the same supercile and disdain, that their great men were wont to do, but familiarly discoursed, ate, and drank, with them. S. Matt. ix. 10, 11.— *Dr. Goodman.*

Tenderness of affection towards the most abandoned sinners, is the highest instance of a Divine and godlike soul. P. lxviii. 18; S. Luke xxiii. 34.—*Wm. Law.*

V. 3.—If we were to select from the four Gospels indiscriminately those parables, and those expressions, which most of all speak of mercy and remission of sins to the returning penitent, we should find that most of them would be found in the Gospel of S. Luke exclusively. Here we have, throughout, the Healer of men, that Great Physician, from whose garments healing went forth; for every part of the narrative, as it drops from the pen of this gentle Evangelist, is, as S. Jerome says, "the medicine of the weak and sickly soul."—*Isaac Williams.*

V. 4.—Who are these? The *father*, the *shepherd*, and the *woman?* Is not God the Father, Christ the Shepherd, the Church the woman? Christ, who took upon Himself thy sins, bears thee in His body; the Church seeks thee out; the Father welcomes thee home.—*S. Ambrose.*

The three parables have much in common; but what is distinctively taught in each seems to be—in the lost *sheep*, our danger by sin; in the *piece of silver*, our soul's value, as made after the Image of God; in *the prodigal son*, man's repentance, and the Father's love.—*J. Ford.*

V. 5.—In His life, He *sought* the sinner, till He found him; in His Death, He *laid him on His shoulders;* in His Resurrection, He *rejoiced* for him; in His Ascension, He did open the doors of heaven, and bring him home to His Father's house. Ezek. xxxiv.; S. John xiii. 1.—*Panygarola.*

He does not say, "Rejoice with the sheep found," but *Rejoice with Me:* because truly our life is His joy, and, when we are brought back safe to heaven, we complete the festival of His delight. Isa. liii. 11; Heb. xii. 2; Acts ix. 4.—*S. Gregory.*

V. 6.—There is no greater sign of holiness, than the procuring, and rejoicing in, another's good. Rom. i. 9; Eph. i. 16; Phil. i. 4, 23.—*G. Herbert.*

V. 7.—We may well suppose, that this their *joy* is "not without song;" while, on earth, there is *music and dancing* to welcome the returning prodigal. Thus the Chapter combines those two distinguishing features of S. Luke's

Gospel; the consolation of penitents, together with "the Psalm, and hymn, and spiritual song." Ver. 25; i. 46, 68; ii. 14, 29.—*J. Ford.*

It cometh to pass by the Providence of God, that S. Luke's Gospel is more cheerful, than all the rest; so that he is well called by one, not only the Evangelist, but "the Psalmist of the New Testament." The song of Zachary, the song of Mary's *Magnificat*, the song of Simeon, the song of the Angels, the Church is beholden to him for reciting them, and to no other penman of the Holy Word. S. Paul calls him, "Luke the physician;" some of the Roman Church, to serve their own imagery delights, out of some histories unallowed, call him, "Luke the painter;" there is no conjecture for this out of the Books of Scripture, which cannot lie; but I have more conjecture for my own opinion, that he was "Luke the musician," a man of divers gifts and qualities. For the Prophets and Evangelists wrote the Scriptures by Divine Revelation, yet always with a sweet tincture of their own abilities; the stately eloquence of Isaiah shows his breeding; S. Paul's logical arguments show his scholarship; S. Peter's facile exhortations show his zeal and plain education: finally, if I be not deceived, the repeating of so many celestial Hymns in S. Luke shows his musical art and affection. 1 Cor. xiv. 32.—*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 8.—The woman, who had lost the piece of silver, found it, not without doors, but within: it was, when her house was made clean; but it was within the house, and within her own house. Make clean thy house by the assistances, which Christ affords thee in His Church; and

thou shalt never fail of finding *that* within thee, that shall save thee. Gen. xviii. 9; Ps. ci.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 10.—If prodigals are pardoned, why should *publicans* despair? If Angels rejoice in a sinner's conversion, why should *Pharisees murmur?*—*J. Ford.*

We may be confident, that our Lord had no design to put any slight upon men, who constantly lead a regular life, nor to prefer a returning penitent before a person, who has held an uninterrupted course of piety and virtue. . . The man, who had lost one sheep out of the hundred, did not value that lost, above the ninety-nine left; no, nor above any single sheep of the whole number, so far as appears: to be sure, he would not have parted with any one of the whole, for the recovering of what was lost; because that would have been doing nothing, but endeavouring to repair one loss by another; and indeed by a greater, all things considered. . . The very turn and structure of the three several Parables abundantly show, that it was no design of our Lord to prefer a late penitent before a person of an even and uniform life; much less, to prefer one single such penitent before numbers of the better kind. The Parables themselves convey no such thought: but it would be absurd to interpret a few particular words of somewhat doubtful meaning against the plain and undoubted drift or tenour of the whole discourse.—Ps. xvi. 3; Eccl. xii. 1; Titus ii. 6.—*Dr. Waterland.*

V. 11.—This parable of the prodigal son is the most remarkable of all those, which were delivered by our

Saviour, as being the most passionate and affecting, set out and adorned with the most lively colours and beautiful similitudes. . . Though we are not solicitously to inquire for a moral meaning of every passage in these allusive discourses; yet in this parable, where the phrases made use of are by other Scriptures interpreted to such a particular sense, it is unreasonable to neglect it.—*Grotius.*

V. 12.—We should always endeavour to realize, under temptation, all the consequences of compliance, as they will afterwards appear to us. xiv. 28.—*T. Scott.*

The substance, which the Father *divided* amongst his sons, was reason, which God gave in common to all mankind, and that, in conjunction with freedom of mind: for every being, that hath the use of reason, hath also liberty of election; the latter affording a field, or theatre, for the former to act upon, and the former enabling him to use the latter well. Isa. i. 18–20.—*Theophylact.*

V. 13.—True felicity once dwelt in man; but nothing now remains, save the trace and empty outline, which he incessantly strives to fill up with all, that surrounds him, seeking in absent things the help, which things present are unable to afford him, and which both are incapable of yielding; because this infinite gulf can only be filled by an infinite and unchangeable object. Eccl. vii. 29; Rev. xviii. 12, 13.—*Pascal.*

A Church cannot certainly plant virtue in the old, nor can a school in the young. Their own will, when they enter into life, remains for trial. God tries them by it.

Previous discipline may instruct and prepare them; but the scene of probation lies beyond the school. Lusts and passions, which hitherto have been dormant, will solicit; dissolute companions will attempt to make a prey of their unguarded minds; false representations of things will be offered to them, in favour of sins made creditable by custom and the popular voice; unhallowed practices, followed by others, will invite them into the same engagements. The very oracles, to which they trust, books, will betray them; whilst infidelity seeks to argue, and vice to flatter, them from their better sense. . . It were too great a blessing, and too high privilege, to be conceded to us, in our duty of instructing the young, if we could infallibly send forth good men and sound Christians in all, who pass under a religious instruction. But God's own Infinite Spirit does not work in that manner; nor therefore can any labours of our's, which are entirely subordinate to Him, and must move within His circle of operation. Gen. xxxiv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 14.—*Davison.*

V. 15.—Fruit, plucked off the tree of Providence, before it is ripe (ver. 12), will readily set the teeth on edge; the enjoyment brings not so much satisfaction and pleasure, as the want of it gives pain. Eccl. iii. 1.—*Boston.*

From self-love and self-will spring all sin and pain. Gen. iii. 6.—*Abp. Leighton.*

Who this *citizen* is, S. Jerome tells us; it is the devil; he is the busy negociator of this world, that "goes about, seeking whom he may devour;" and is ready to list those

into his service, who (having misspent their talents), are by a vicious necessity disposed to his service.—*Dr. Goodman.*

V. 16.—*No man gave unto him.* If a child once contemns his parents, he exposes himself to be contemned by others. . . It is an unhappy question Cassianus asked an undutiful son; "What stranger will he ever find faithful to him, that to his parents is become an enemy?" What will he be to others, that is false to his own parents? . . To be false in our relations, is to break our trust, in which both religion and nature hath set us. Rom. i. 30, 31.—*O. Feltham.*

V. 17.—Three things move men to compassion; simplicity, propinquity, necessity. So these three move God to pity; first, our simplicity, noted in the parable of the lost sheep, which is a silly creature; secondly, our propinquity, signified by the lost piece of silver; for a Christian hath God's Image, and bears His Name; thirdly, necessity, shown in the lost son—*I perish with hunger.*—*Ludolphus.*

All the misery and distress of human nature, whether of body or mind, is wholly owing to this one cause, that God is not in man, nor man in God, as the state of his nature requires. It is because man has lost that first "Life of God," in his soul, in and for which he was first created. Eph. i. 18.—*Wm. Law.*

V. 18.—Doth God reward Ahab's temporary humiliation? And will He not much more reward thy hearty and unfeigned repentance? Have the hypocrites their

reward? And canst thou doubt of thine? This was the very ground of all that comfort, wherewith the prodigal son sustained his heart and hope, when he thus discoursed to his own soul; *If all the hired servants, &c.*, surely my father will never be so unmindful of me, who am his son, though too unworthy of that name, as to let me *perish with hunger.* Every temporal blessing, bestowed upon the wicked, ought to be of the child of God entertained, as a fresh assurance, given him, of his everlasting reward hereafter. Gen. xxv. 5, 6; S. Matt. v. 45; Acts xiv. 17; Gal. iv. 28, 31.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

I have sinned. Such efficacy have three syllables. Borne on these three syllables, the fire of the sacrifice ascends before God in Heaven. xviii. 13; 2 Sam. xii. 13. —*S. Augustine.*

V. 20.—The return of the sinner is expressed by the word *going* (ver. 18); but God's coming to the sinner, by *running.* God maketh greater haste to the sinner, than the sinner doth to God: God maketh much of our first inclination, and would not have it fall to the ground. Ps. xxi. 3.—*Farindon.*

Do any desire to return to the way of righteousness? God receives them graciously, and embraces them. For He weighs repentance, not by number of years, but sincerity of heart. S. Matt. xx. 6–9.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 21.—*Father.* It is a great grace received, to be able, before we pray, to say "*Father.*" For what now will the Father withhold from His children's supplications, when he hath already granted them this grace, to be His children? xii. 32; Rom. viii. 32.—*S. Augustine.*

Against Heaven and in Thy sight. He, who wilfully insults God with his vices, sins infinitely; because he sins against Infinite Majesty. All indignities rise in proportion to the known grandeur of Him, to whom they are offered, and in strict justice ought to be punished in the same proportion; if offered to our earthly father, they are an unnatural breach of filial duty, and are punishable with the forfeiture of his favour; if offered to our King, they are rebellion and high treason, and are punishable with the loss of honour, fortune, and life; if offered to God, they are blasphemy and impiety, and punishable, as they are committed against the Infinite Being, with endless disgrace and misery. This gradation cannot be denied, without levelling God and all His creatures, and confounding all distinctions. S. Matt. xii. 31; Heb. x. 29. —*P. Skelton.*

V. 22.—The *shoes* may point to the Ministerial office, as well as to the ordinary duties of obedience; for how "beautiful are the *feet* of them," that preach the Gospel of peace: and when more beautiful, as an illustration of the free and full riches of God's grace, than when, as in the case of Paul, they are called to preach the Gospel, who before disobeyed, and, it may be, even persecuted it? Rom. x. 15; Gal. i. 23, 24.—*J. Ford.*

V. 23.—"This feast of fat things," is to be contrasted with the beggarly husks and the swine's relics; but it may also serve to remind us of the Sacramental Feast of Christ's Body and Blood, which the Father hath prepared for penitent prodigals. Thus the *risen* Lazarus sate at the supper table with Jesus (S. John xii. 1, 2). But it is

very important here to notice, that, though the father forgives his penitent son, he orders his *servants* to clothe him with the best robe, &c.; for so is God's dispensation of Grace in the Gospel. It is He, who pardoneth and absolveth "all penitent believers," but He employs His *Ministers*, to sign and to seal their forgiveness, in the administration of His holy Word and Sacraments. They act in the Name and by the authority of Christ; they are "the Stewards of the mysteries of God;" and what they do in this capacity, according to His Will and Ordinance, He allows and confirms, as though it were done by Himself. 1 Cor. iv. 1; S. John xx. 22, 23; Acts ix. 6, 17.—*J. Ford.*

V. 24.—Without these reserves of Divine Grace (forgiveness of sin after Baptism), and after-emanations from the Mercy-seat, no man could be saved, and the death of Christ would become inconsiderable to most of His greatest purposes; for none should have received advantage, but newly baptized persons, whose *albs* of Baptism served them also for a winding sheet.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

Observe here, careful reader, that God sometimes fills the heart of the newly penitent with special inward consolations, until they become established in His ways. . . Yet these are by no means the consequences of a more matured state of grace; but are rather, certain cordials and allurements of our Heavenly Father, such as are withholden from the more perfect. Acts viii. 8, 39. —*Caetanus.*

This sweet spiritual comfort is not meat for every mouth, but kept in reserve for the beloved and chosen of

God. A soul, immersed in sense and worldly pleasures, cannot be partaker of those dainties, nor will they dwell with polluted thoughts and designs. The Ark and Dagon could not stand upon the same Altar; nor will Christ submit to share the heart with mammon. God sent no manna, till all the provision of Egypt was spent, and this heavenly hidden manna is tied to the same rules; it will not descend, till vain cares and sinful inclinations are sent off to make room for it. Though God be liberal, yet is He not lavishly profuse. He will not "cast His pearls before swine," nor give out tastes and patterns to them, who have no disposition to buy. Do but resolve unfeignedly to serve Him, and set about it in good earnest, and then this joy will flow in upon thee; and, as it never failed any man, so it will be sure not only to answer, but far exceed thy largest expectations. The evil habits of thy past naughty life shall be no bar to it. For so abundantly kind and tender is the God we serve, that He is forward in encouraging all, that sincerely return to Him, and takes particular care that they, who have forsaken Him long, and wandered far, shall meet with at least as friendly entertainment, when they flee to Him for mercy, as others, who never broke loose from Him at all. Ps. xxv. 13; S. John xiv. 21.—*Parsons.*

V. 25.—If thy son be given to lavish company (ver. 13), endeavour to stave him off with lawful recreations. Be cheerful with him, that he may love thy presence; and wink at small faults, that thou mayest gain him. Be not always chiding, lest thou harden him; neither knit thy brow too often, lest thou discourage him. Remember the

discretion of a father oftentimes prevents the destruction of a child. Eph. vi. 4.—*F. Quarles.*

Music and dancing. Have we not here the lawful, innocent, and even religious, use of these recreations, as, at S. Matt. xiv. 6, the licentious and unlawful?—*J. Ford.*

V. 29.—If God deals more sparingly with thee here, be of good comfort. What He keeps *from* thee, He keeps *for* thee. If He gives thee not *a kid to make merry with thy friends*, mark what He saith, *All that I have is thine*—Heaven, and Glory, and Immortality; and let that satisfy thee. The comforting expectation of the future lifts us above what is present. xvii. 25.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 31.—*Son, thou art ever with me.* This (the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration) may prove a solemn piece of comfort to some, who suspect their state more, than they need, and think it is impossible, that they should be in a regenerate condition, because they have not as yet found any such notable change in themselves, as they see and observe in others. These men may as well be jealous they are not men; because they cannot remember, when their soul came to them. If they can find the effects of spiritual life in themselves, let them call it what they will, a religious education, or a custom of well-doing, or an unacquaintedness with sin; let them comfort themselves in their estate, and be thankful to God, who visited them thus betimes: let it never trouble them, that they were not once, as bad as other men; but rather acknowledge God's mercy, who hath prevented such a change, and, by uniting them to Him in the cradle, hath educated and

nursed them up in familiarity with the Spirit. S. John iii. 8 ; Eph. vi. 4.—*Dr. Hammond.*

V. 32.—How nice is the observance of all the lesser proprieties of the narrative. The father, in the midst of all his natural affection, is yet full of the moral significance of his son's return ; that he has come back another person from what he was, when he went, or, while he tarried in that far land : he sees into the deep of his joy, that he is receiving him now indeed a *son*, once *dead*, but now *alive ;* once *lost* to him, but now *found* alike by both. But the servant confines himself to the more external features of the case, to the fact, that, after all he had gone through of excess and hardship, his father has yet received him *safe and sound.* Philem. 12–16.—*R. C. Trench.*

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 1.—Every man is a steward of God. A threefold farm is entrusted to his care, and of each farm he must prudently dispense the proceeds. The first is this world; temporal good things are its proceeds; these he must guard from the attacks of robbers, and distribute them, as entrusted to him, to the servants of his Lord. His second farm is his own body, which he must also protect, lest by the door of the bodily senses death get possession of his soul; the blessings of the body, as health, strength, &c., are to be used in God's service and for His honour. Lastly, he has his soul, to be defended from all evil thoughts; all his spiritual powers are to be employed in matters, relating to the knowledge, the honour and the love of God. . . They are well called "*His* goods." For, what we have of good, belongs to God, as its Author, but to ourselves, in the use we make of it.—*Ludolphus.*

I will never trust any man not of sound religion; for he, that is false to God, can never be true to man. xviii. 1–4; Ps. liii. 1–4.—*Lord Bacon.*

V. 2.—The man, who will not look into the state of his affairs in this world, must be ruined in this world; the man, who will not look into the state of his soul, must be ruined for ever. Heb. ii. 3.—*A. W. Hare.*

V. 3.—He does not say, "What shall I answer!" but

What shall I do? Because, in the presence of the offended Judge, words, however persuasive, avail nothing, but only acts and deeds. iii. 10; Acts ii. 37; ix. 6.—*Ludolphus.*

I cannot dig, &c. A double misery is upon the great part of mankind, that is, impotency and pride. Rom. v. 6; Rev. iii. 17.—*Flavel.*

V. 4.—Nothing is so important to any man, as his own estate and condition; nothing so great, so amazing, as Eternity. If, therefore, we find persons indifferent to the loss of their being, and to the danger of endless misery, it is impossible that this temper should be natural. They are quite other men in all other regards: they fear the smallest inconveniences; they see them, as they approach, and feel them, if they arrive; and he, who passeth days and nights in chagrin or despair, for the loss of an employment, or for some imaginary blemish in his honour, is the very same mortal, who knows that he must lose all by death, and yet remains without disquiet, resentment, or emotion. This wonderful insensibility, with respect to things of the most fatal consequence, in a heart, so nicely sensible of the meanest trifles, is an astonishing prodigy, an unintelligible enchantment, a supernatural blindness and infatuation. 2 Thess. iii. 2.—*Pascal.*

V. 5.—He had *wasted* his master's goods, by improvidence; now he cheats him by downright fraud. Sin plucks on sin, one offence prepares the mind for another, and frequently causes the occasion for it: the

second is worse than the first, often in itself, always in its aggravating circumstances; then, as sin becomes more easy, repentance is more difficult, and the soul ripens fast for destruction. "Man," said the unhappy Francesco Spira, "knows the beginnings of sin; but who bounds the issues thereof?" iii. 19, 20.—*J. Ford.*

V. 7.—Satan either tells us, it is no sin; or, it is not so great a sin; or, not so many sins. If we make him our auditor, he will falsify our accounts, like the unjust steward in the Gospel; *How much owest thou my Master?* Our consciences tell us, *an hundred measures*, yea, ten thousand talents; but he will falsify our account, and make us write wrong, and *set down fifty.* Gen. iii 4, 5; Mal. iii. 13.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

The Saviour must still have the privilege, reserved unto Him, of being the absolute Lord "over His own house:" it is sufficient for His officers, that they be esteemed, as Moses was, "faithful in all His house, as servants" (Heb. iii. 5, 6). The place wherein they serve, is a steward's place; and the Apostle telleth them, that "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. iv. 2). They may not, therefore, carry themselves in their office, as the *unjust steward* did, and presume to strike out their Master's debt, without His direction, and contrary to His liking. Now we know that our Lord hath given no authority unto His stewards to grant an acquittance to any of His debtors, that bring not unfeigned faith and repentance with them. . . To think, that it lieth in the power of any priest truly to absolve a man from his sins, without implying the

condition of his believing and repenting, as he ought to do, is both presumption and madness in the highest degree.—*Abp. Usher.*

We are bound as much to do good to others, as not to injure them; to supply their wants, as not to rob them; to reach forth a hand to help them, as not to smite them with the fist of wickedness: and, though *my hundred measures of oil be my own*, and I may demand them, yet there is a voice from Heaven and from the Mercy-seat, which bids me; *Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.* Acts v. 40; S. Matt. x. 8.—*Farindon.*

V. 8.—Arguments taken from a parable or similitude, are of force, no further than they pertain to the end of the parable, or that resemblance, for which things are compared. The labourer's penny doth not prove an equality of glory in Heaven; nor our Saviour's commendation of the *unjust steward* justify his cheating of his Master. Christ proveth the readiness of God to do justice to His servants, upon their constant prayer, by a similitude taken from an unjust judge. S. Matt. xx. 9–13.—*Abp. Bramhall.*

Wisely. Faith is a provident wise grace, and makes the soul bethink itself, how it can live in another world. Deut. xxxii. 29.—*Gurnall.*

V. 9.—Having thus framed the body of the parable, our Saviour now giveth it a soul, in this latter part of the verse; breathing into it the breath of life, by applying it. Application is the life of a parable. The commending of the steward's wisdom, was with the purpose to recommend

the example to us; that we might from it learn to provide against the time to come, as he did. So that the application hath two parts. The one more general, respecting the end; that as he was careful to provide maintenance, for the preservation of his natural life, so we should be careful to make provision for our souls, that we may attain to everlasting life: the other, more special, respecting the means; that, as he provided for himself out of his Master's goods, by disposing the same into other hands, and upon several persons; so we should lay up for ourselves a good foundation towards the attainment of everlasting life, out of the *unrighteous mammon*, wherewith God hath entrusted us; by being rich in good works, communicating and distributing some of that in our hands towards the necessities of others. 1 Tim. vi. 17–19.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

I make no doubt, but God's mercy is ready to shine upon ours; for He loves it, and loves to look on it. I doubt not, but He rewards our mercy with the blessings of this life. . . But what are these to that reward, which is laid up for those, who sow plentifully? What are riches, that have wings, to Immortality? What is a palace to Heaven? We visit the sick, and the Spirit of comfort visits us; we serve our brethren, and the Angels minister unto us; we cover the naked with our cloth, and God clothes us with joy; we convert a sinner, and shine as stars; we part with a few shekels of silver, and the hand of mercy works and turns them into a crown; we sow temporal transitory things, and the harvest is Eternity. Whilst we make them ours, they are weak and impotent; but when we part with them, they work miracles, and

remove mountains, all, that is between us and blessedness. All the riches in the world will "not add one cubit to our stature;" but, if we thus tread them under our feet, they will lift us up, as high as heaven. The best gains are those we purchase with our loss; and the best way to "find our bread," is to "cast it upon the waters." Isa. lviii. 7–11.—*Farindon.*

V. 10.—Take notice, that He says not, that He, who is *faithful* in *great* things, shall also be in *little* ones; but He quite turns the position another way; because, in effect, fidelity makes itself more known in little things, than in great ones. When a steward reckons the expenses in a house, it is not in his not being found faulty in his accounts a hundred or two hundred pounds, that his great fidelity appears; but that he is found not to have miscounted a farthing. A good servant is not so soon found or known in those great things, which purely belong to his duty, as in certain little cares, to which he is not obliged. And, lastly, a son gives a less mark of his love and respect for his father, by the obedience he renders him in matters of consequence, than by those, he performs which are of less concern; and by his care never to do the least thing, that may displease his father. Gen. xxiv. 33; S. Matt. v. 19.—*Rodriguez.*

Suffer not Thy servants, O Lord, to neglect the smallest action, that concerns our Eternity: but quicken us with a ready diligence to avoid every least occasion of sin, and to embrace every least opportunity of Thy service. As we inure ourselves in little instances, shall we prove in great ones. . . If our affections are not

masters of the *unrighteous* mammon, we must be its servants; and, if we are its servants, we cannot, O Lord, be Thine. xix. 17.—*Austin.*

V. 11, 12.—Riches are foreign to us, because they are not natural to us. They are neither born with us, nor do they leave the world with us. Those things, which we cannot take with us, are not our's. Virtue is the only attendant on the dead; mercifulness only follows us beyond the grave. Job. i. 21: Ps. xlix. 17.—*S. Ambrose.*

Be rather careful of what thou dost, than of what thou hast; for what thou hast is none of thine, and will leave thee at thy death, or thou the pleasure of it in thy sickness; but what thou dost is thine, and will follow thee to thy grave, and plead for, or against thee at thy resurrection. xii. 19.; S. Mark x. 21.—*F. Quarles.*

V. 13.—Thou canst not love divers and contrary things. If thou wouldst know what thou lovest, mark well what thou most thinkest upon. Ps. x. 4.—*Abp. Leighton.*

Had the Pharisees seen, that to *serve God* implies an universal obedience to all His laws, and that to *serve Mammon* implies an equal submission to all the maxims of the world, and that these laws and these maxims are, in numberless cases, directly contrary to each other, they would then have seen our Lord's observation in its true light; and they could not have helped feeling the propriety of the conduct recommended to them. But the sentiments, arising out of this truth, would have given

no small disturbance to men, who were determined to act in defiance of them. To avoid this inconvenience, they had only to put a false gloss on the words of Jesus; to suppose, for instance, that by serving God was meant, to "make long prayers," and by serving Mammon, to make a reasonable provision for their families; and then, where was the inconsistency of two such services? In this way of understanding the text, nothing is easier than to *serve God and Mammon*. And thus, by substituting a proposition of their own, in the room of that, which He had delivered, they escape from His reproof, and even find means to divest themselves of it. Isa. v. 20; Ps. lvi. 5.—*Bp. Hurd.*

V. 14.—Men are atheists, because they are first vicious; and they question the truth of Christianity, because they hate the practice of it. S. John iii. 19–21. —*Dr. South.*

V. 14, 15.—Art thou secure, and yet hast sinned? It is, because thou fearest no executioner. Thou fearest him not, because there is none to judge thee. There is none to judge, because there is none accuser. There is none to accuse, because there is none to witness. There is no witness, because thy sin is secret. Thou fool, thou hast all these within thyself. Thy conscience is them all; accuser, witness, jury, judge, executioner. Thou hast a court within thy heart, the court indeed of conscience. For conscience there acts all these offices, indicts, convicts, condemns, and executes. S. Mark vi. 16; S. John iv. 17–19; Titus iii. 11.—*Dr. R. Clerke.*

V. 15.—There are not many, who can stand the test of a close inspection. Their virtues shine upon us at a distance; it is, upon a nearer approach, that we descry their failings. The distant ground, which is adorned with varieties of flowers, seems to be all flower, and to glow with one continued and unmixed lustre; but, if we were on the spot, we should discover several weeds, interspersed amidst such a beautiful assemblage of colours. Prov. xviii. 17.—*J. Seed.*

V. 16.—The old tabernacle was still standing, because our High Priest was not yet entered into the true Sanctuary; and therefore in this dawning of the Gospel, when the Sun of Righteousness had not yet climbed up to the proper horizon of the Church, in this interposition of S. John preaching, who was, as Nazianzene calls him, placed in the middle between the Law and the Gospel, this petition was most fit and opportune, "Thy Kingdom come!"—*Farindon.*

V. 17.—The fundamental will of the Almighty we cannot suppose subject to change; neither can any voice, that has once proceeded out of the mouth of God, for the general moral guidance of His creatures, ever sink into a dead letter; so sink, I mean, as to lose all force of obligation upon subjects, on whose conscience an Eternal Law is written, as it is called, "of nature," with which such moral word of Revelation is in harmony. 1 S. John ii. 7, 8.—*J. Miller.*

V. 19.—This is an historical parable, and a parabolical history. Some such persons there were, and some such

things were really done; but some other things were figuratively, symbolically, and parabolically added.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 20.—Lazarus by his name is known in Heaven: the rich man is without a name anywhere.—*Bengel.*

He is not charged with injuring any person, or defrauding his neighbour. The only fault recorded is, that *he fared sumptuously every day,* while Lazarus *lay at his gate,* perishing for want of common necessaries. He was one of that set of men, a numerous set, who are very hospitable to those, that do not want, and very unfriendly to those, that do. xiv. 12.—*J. Seed.*

A smooth and easy life, an uninterrupted enjoyment of the goods of Providence, full meals, soft raiment, well furnished homes, the pleasures of sense, the feeling of security, the consciousness of wealth,—these, and the like, if we are not careful, choke up all the avenues of the soul, through which the light and breath of Heaven might get to us. Amos vi. 1–6.—*J. H. Newman.*

His great fault was, that he cared for nothing, but himself. *His fine linen and sumptuous fare* were the index to his heart.—*Bp. Medley.*

V. 21.—We may be as happy in russet, as in tissue. Heb. xi. 37–40.—*Bp. Hall.*

One has well observed, that "It is far better to be of the number of those who, like Lazarus, need relief, than of those, who, like Dives, refuse to give it." S. James ii. 5, 6.—*J. Ford.*

Let the indigent rejoice in thy gift to him, that thou

also mayest also rejoice in God's gifts to thee. He is in want before thee; thou art in want before God. Despise not thou the man, who needs what thou dost possess; God will not despise thee, in thy need of what He has to give. . . Thou art at once in abundance, and in want; in abundance of temporal things, in want of eternal things. The man, whom thou hearest, is a beggar; and thou thyself art God's beggar. Petition is made to thee; and thou makest thy petition. As thou hast dealt with thy petitioner, so shall God deal with His. Thou art at once full, and empty; fill the empty with thy fulness, that thy emptiness may be filled with the fulness of God. S. Matt. xxv. 35–41.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 22.—Whenever such a penitent soul (refer to xv. 7) hath bidden adieu to the body, those Blessed Spirits stand ready to receive and guard it through those legions of malignant spirits, that do always infest these lower tracts of air, and to conduct it safe to those happy abodes, where it is to lodge, till the Resurrection; for it is said of Lazarus's soul, that it was *carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom.* All which is a clear demonstration of the vast esteem, which those Blessed Angels have of souls. For, can it be thought, that such noble beings, who have a God and themselves to converse with, and have so immediate a prospect both of His beauty, and their own, to exercise their faculties, and employ their contemplation, would be so ready and willing, as they are, to attend upon souls, and minister to their safety and happiness, if they had not a mighty value and estimation of them? Eph. vi. 12.—*Dr. J. Scott.*

Here is one, who in his life had not a single friend; and now suddenly not one, but many Angels, wait upon him.—*Luther.*

V. 24.—It is better to be in doubt on things secret, than to strive about what is uncertain. I have no doubt at all, but that the rich man is to be regarded, as suffering penal fire, and the poor man, as enjoying the cool refreshment of joy; but the strict sense, in which we must understand that fire of hell, that bosom of Abraham, that tongue of the rich man, that finger of the poor man, that tormenting thirst, that cooling allayer of heat, is rarely if ever disclosed to the inquiries of the meek, and never to those, who are given to contention. Deut. xxix. 29; Ps. xxv. 9.—*S. Augustine.*

No eminency of grace, no dignity of place, no degree of authority must make us forget this; to own, and acknowledge even the lowest Christians, as our beloved brethren. The proud rich man can be content to claim kindred with Abraham; he calls him *Father Abraham:* but ye read not that ever he said, *Brother Lazarus;* and ye know what became of him. It will not serve us, nor save us, to be able to say, "Abraham is our Father;" except we will charitably acknowledge the poorest Christian, even Lazarus, for our brother. xviii. 11; S. James iii. 1; Heb. ii. 11; 1 S. Pet. v. 1; Rev. i. 9.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

"As there are different sins," says an ancient writer, "so shall there be variety of punishments. The adulterer shall have one kind of torment, the murderer another, the robber and extortioner another, the drunkard another, the

liar and false swearer another;" each that, which shall be most sensible and afflicting to him. And then he proceeds, "that the proud man shall be trodden under foot; the glutton gnawed with extreme hunger; the drunkard parched with unquenchable thirst; the voluptuous filled with gall; the tender and delicate seared with hot irons:" all which some have thought to be denoted in that description of the wicked man's sufferings, given at large by Job, ch. xx. Judg. i. 6, 7; Prov. i. 31.—*Parsons.*

V. 25.—The very first cause of all remorse and anguish will be the very *remembrance*, that thou wast a *Son.* S. Matt. xxii. 12; Heb. x. 26, 31.—*J. Ford.*

Had he remembered on earth, he would not have been called to *remember* in hell. . . Look at the affairs of common life, and be taught by them. Do not neglect, and want of attention, and not looking about us to see what we have to do, bring upon us consequences, as ruinous to our worldly business, as any *active* misbehaviour? It is an event of every day, that a man by mere laziness and inattention to his business, does as certainly bring himself and family to poverty, and end his days in a jail, as if he were in wanton mischief, to set fire to his own house. So it is also with the affairs of the soul: neglect of that, forgetfulness of God, who can alone save it, will work its ruin, as surely as a long and daring course of profligate wickedness. Prov. xxii. 29; xxiv. 30.—*H. Martyn.*

These things are not *good*, but only go under this deputative and borrowed title. The world hath cried

them up, but the Scripture hath no such name for them; it is "good to praise the Lord;" nay it is "good to be afflicted;" this we read: but where do we read, it is good to be rich; it is good to be honourable; it is good to go "in purple, and fare deliciously every day?" We find many curses and woes sent after them; but we never find them graced with the title of good. "Thou hast received thy good things," saith Abraham to Dives; good things, but *thine*, such as thy lusts esteemed so; thy good things, and such good things, which have helped to hurry thee to this place of torment. S. Matt. v. 3–13. —*Farindon.*

Oh, how great a reward might men receive at God's hand, if they did not anticipate their reward, and desire it in this life. xv. 12; S. Matt. vi. 1–6.—*S. Jerome.*

V. 27.—Some divines, both ancient and modern (Beda and Bellarmine for instance) have thought, that the rich epicure became solicitor for his brethren, that they should convert and repent, not out of any compassion and love, but only for that his conscience told him, he had given them ill example, while he lived among them, and that, if they were damned, his own torture would be increased. vi. 39; 1 Tim. v. 22.—*Dean Boys.*

"He, that could not teach himself, when he was alive, would teach Abraham, now he is dead" (Bp. Hacket). What a warning! "Hell is Truth seen too late." Behold the man, before completely sunk in self and sensuality, now, as it were, risen from the dead, and all awake and in earnest about the things of God. Such is the only change and conversion, which sinners, who have "sold their birthright" in this life, can expect to find in

the life to come. Their eyes will be opened, not to see their God, but to see their own irremediable folly and misery, to learn the soul's value from its loss, and not from its salvation. Prov. i. 24–33.—*J. Ford.*

Lest they also, &c. As if they were now living on his property, inheriting with it his worldly mind and worldly ways, "clothed," as he was, "in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day;" and therefore exposed to a like danger of having their future portion with him *in the same place of torment.* Ps. xlix. 13.—*J. Ford.*

V. 29.—It is a rare thing to find much retirement unto God, much humility and brokenness of spirit, true purity and spirituality of heart, in the affluence and great prosperity of the world. It is no easy thing to carry a very full cup even, and to digest well the fatness of a great estate, and great place. They are not to be envied, that have them, even though they be of the better sort of men; it is a thousand to one, but that they shall be losers by the gains and advancements of this world; suffering proportionably great abatements of their best advantages, by their prosperity. The generality of men while they are at ease, do securely neglect God, and little mind either to speak to Him, or to hear Him speak to them. God complains thus of His own people, "I spake to them in their prosperity; and they would not hear." The noises of coach-wheels, of their pleasures, and of their great affairs, so fill their ears, that the "still voice," wherein God is, cannot be heard. Ezek. xvi. 49; 1 S. John ii. 16.—*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 31.—For supposing such a miracle were wrought

before their eyes, they might as well conclude that evidence to be a phantasm, as they now conclude the Scripture to be a forgery. He, that will hope to reform such men's judgments, must have the art of reforming their manners, and the power of awakening their consciences; for in the conscience it is (as our Apostle has observed, 1 Tim. i. 19) that "the shipwreck of faith" begins, and there only can it be repaired. Let them be persuaded to live, so as to be able to wish a Resurrection; and then the Article will soon appear credible. 1 Tim. vi. 5.—*Dean Young.*

It is an admitted principle, that evidence, in moral subjects, is modified by the mind, to which it is addressed. —*Davison.*

Where infidelity is the effect of profligate wickedness, it deserves not so much regard from God, as that He should condescend to make particular applications to it by new lights and evidences; and, should He do it, there is reason to suspect it would be ineffectual. We see, in the ordinary course of Providence, many judgments, bestowed upon sinners to reclaim and amend them; but they harden themselves against them; so that their last state is worse than their first. . . Did not the guards, who were eye-witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection, who saw the Angel, that rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, who shook and trembled with fear, and "became as dead men,—did not they, after all this, receive money to deny all, they saw, and to give false evidence against the person, they beheld coming from the grave? So, you see, it is in the nature of man to withstand such evidences, where the power of sin is prevalent. Isa. i. 5; Ps. lxxxii. 5.—*Bp. Sherlock.*

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 1.—*Woe unto him, &c.* That we may not think only notorious sins, comprised under the name of *offences*, and that none shall be condemned for giving offence, but workers of downright iniquity, our Saviour, in His explication of the parable of the tares and wheat, seems to distinguish the scandalous from the sinners, but at the same time concludes them both under the same condemnation (See S. Matt. xiii. 41. "All that *offend*, and them which *do iniquity.*") . . This threatening of our Saviour is so placed, indeed, as if it belonged only to those, who gave offence to the weak or *little ones* (v. 2). . . Hence it is, that the Schools, and from them all other casuists, have distinguished between the scandal, that arises from the ignorance or infirmity, and that, which arises from the malice, of those, who take offence; between the scandal of the weak, or *little ones*, and the scandal of the Pharisees; and they have laid it down, as a safe rule, that, though we are obliged to use all possible care not to give offence to the weak and ignorant, yet we are not under any such restraints, in regard to the perverse and malicious. Rom. xv. 1; 1 Cor. viii. 8–12; S. Matt. xv. 14.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

V. 2.—If we ourselves are commanded to take heed, as persons accountable to God for the souls of others, how much more vigilant in their behalf, must He, their

Father, be, who begat them? By the punishment of the man, who offends, we learn the reward of him, who saves: for, had not the Salvation of one soul been of such exceeding care to Christ, He would not threaten the offender with such a punishment. xi. 13; Zech. ii. 8; Acts ix. 4.—*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 4.—Forgiveness is chiefly taken for abstaining from revenge; and so far we are to forgive our enemies, even whilst they continue so, and though they do not repent. Besides, we are to pray for them, and to do them all offices of common humanity and charity. But sometimes forgiveness doth signify a perfect reconciliation to those, that have offended us; so as to take them again into our friendship; which they are by no means fit for, till they have repented of their enmity and laid it aside; and this is the meaning of that text, of *rebuking our brother, if he trespass against us;* and, *if he repent, to forgive him.* Prov. xix. 11; Col. iii. 8–13.—*Nelson.*

A Christian, of all others, must necessarily be the most merciful man. For he, considering the great debt of his sins, and his little ability of satisfaction, and how freely these were satisfied for by another, how can he be backward in forgiving others, that are culpable to him? Nay, more; the condition of his pardon stands but by the exercise of his mercy towards others. S. Matt. xviii. 33.—*Lord Capel.*

V. 5.—Increase our *Faith;* not our patience, or charity, or self-controul, the graces, immediately needed to be exercised towards the trespassing brother; but

increase our *faith;* strengthen and enlarge in us the heavenly *principle* of these and all other graces, that, by growing at the root, we may grow in the produce of the branches, and, especially, by knowing and believing more and more the forgiveness of our own sins, we may be disposed and constrained to forgive others. This prayer of the Apostles is a remarkable proof of their advancement in grace by the teaching of the Spirit. And our Lord's gracious reply is most apposite, where respect is rather had to the quality, than the quantity, of faith; and the *one small grain* is to be contrasted with the *increase,* which they desired. Let us first make sure the truth of faith; and then we shall soon see what spiritual wonders it will accomplish. 2 Thess. i. 3; Phil. iv. 13; Heb. xi. —*J. Ford.*

Certainly they did never have any grace, who did not complain to have too little.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 6.—*A grain, &c.* Our Lord adapts His requirements to the infant state of His Church, His "little, little flock," and is content with a very small quantity of faith. Exactly so He speaks of "two or three gathered together in His Name," making His promise, not to the greatest, but the fewest, number. xii. 32.—*J. Ford.*

V. 8.—*Will not rather say unto him, &c.* The servant here is the ancient *slave,* the Master's own absolute property, not engaged under any right to wages, but bound to do every thing for nothing. Such are we, the Redeemed of the Lord, spiritually. . . We must always be waiting, in expectation of some fresh service,

some new call to Christian duty, labour and self-denial. How significantly is this intimated to us in the case of Abraham! "*After these things*, God did tempt Abraham" (Gen. xxii. 1); after the Patriarch had suffered so much, and probably expected some respite, and to be allowed to *Go, and sit down to meat*, the command from Heaven reaches him; *Make ready* to serve Me; *Gird thyself* to another, and far more severe, trial of thy faith and love. And how readily did he obey the call, and yet unfeignedly confess himself to be an "*unprofitable servant*" (Gen. xviii. 27), in these things leaving us an example, that we may "walk in the steps of his faith," and be "Blessed with faithful Abraham," and at last *rest* "in his bosom;" for "there *remaineth* a rest unto the people of God." Rom. vi.; Gal. v. 9.—*J. Ford.*

V. 10.—We acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well; but the meritorious dignity of doing well, we utterly renounce. We see how far we are from the perfect righteousness of the Law: the little fruit which we have in holiness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound; we put no confidence at all in it, we challenge nothing in the world for it, we dare not call God to reckoning, as if we had Him in our debt-books: our continual suit to Him is, and must be, to bear with our infirmities and pardon our offences. Ps. cxliii. 2; 1 S. John i. 8.—*Hooker.*

Say ye are, &c. Wretched is the man, whom the Lord shall call *an unprofitable servant* (S. Matt. xxv. 30); happy he, who so calls himself.—*Bengel.*

V. 14.—*As they went.* Though God hath not tied

Himself to means, yet He hath tied us to the use of them; and we have never more reason to expect the Divine assistance, than when we are doing our utmost endeavours. Gen. xxiv. 27; Isa. lxiv. 5.—*Scougal.*

V. 15.—The *loud voice*, in giving thanks, is the counterpart to the *lifted up voice*, in imploring mercy; the first was the expression of deeply felt need, the latter of faith and adoring gratitude. The remaining "nine" were, as S. Bernard writes of some worldly courtiers in his time, "clamorous in begging; never quiet, till they got something; and then, ungrateful for the benefit bestowed." May He, who opens His hand "to Bless us," ever "open our lips" to show forth His Praise. Ps. ciii. 1–5.—*J. Ford.*

V. 17.—There is scarce any duty of religion, more commonly neglected, or more slightly performed, than that of Praise and Thanksgiving. The sense of our wants puts us upon begging favours from God, and the consciousness of our sins constrains us to deprecate His wrath. Thus interest and self-love send us to our prayers; but Alas! how small a part hath an ingenuous gratitude in our devotion? How seldom are we serious and hearty in our acknowledgments of the Divine bounty! The slender returns of this nature, which we make, are many times a formal ceremony, a preface to usher in our petitions for what we want, rather than any sincere expression of our thankful resentment for what we have received. Col. iii. 15–17; iv. 2.—*Scougal.*

V. 18.—*Thanksgiving.* It is by taking, eating, and

drinking, that we show forth our acceptance of Christ's Salvation, and our thankfulness for the same. But how many are cleansed from the leprosy of sin in Holy Baptism, who refuse to *return to give glory to God* at the Eucharistic Table! They forfeit the benefit they had received, and for their monstrous ingratitude provoke most justly God's wrath and indignation against them. For, if these *nine* lepers were not held guiltless for omitting a mode of declaring their thankfulness, which the Lord had not prescribed to them, how much more inexcusable must Christians be, who absent themselves from the Lord's Supper, after repeated invitations and warnings from Him, and who, not once, but habitually, refuse to "Do this in Remembrance of Him?" xii. 47. —*J. Ford.*

V. 19.—He made no reply, signifying thereby, that he came back again to signify his own thanks, not to tell tales of others' ingratitude.—*Jansenius.*

V. 21.—"The Kingdom of Heaven is *within you.*" Wheresoever Majesty resides, the Court is there; and, wheresoever the King governs, there his Kingdom is. If the Almighty govern all the passions, motions, and affections of our souls, if once He be the Sovereign Monarch of our hearts, if the love of God give law to all our inclinations, the Holy Ghost is then as truly in us, as a King is in His Kingdom; and He is nô otherwise in Heaven. This is that *Heaven upon earth,* which none can understand, but those devout and pious souls, who by experience taste and see how sweet God's Kingdom is,

where Christ governs by faith, and the Holy Ghost by charity; or, as S. Austin says, "whose King is Truth, whose Law is Love."—*A Contrite Heart.*

How great a blessing is it, my brethren, at all times, but especially in an age like this, that the tokens of Christ are not only without us, but more properly *within us!* I say, in this age especially, because it is an age, in which the outward signs of Christ's Presence have well nigh deserted us. . . Since, then, in this our age, He has in judgment obscured the visible and public notes of His Kingdom among us, what a mercy is it to us, that He has not deprived us of such, as are personal and private! . . . Who among us may not, if he will, lead such a life, as to have those secret and truer tokens to rest his faith on; so as to be sure, and certain, and convinced, that the Church, which Baptized us, has still the Presence of Christ, and therefore is within the bounds of His Kingdom, and is the gate to His eternal favour? 2 Cor. xiii. 5; 1 S. John v. 10.—*J. H. Newman.*

Every man hath a *kingdom* within himself. Reason, as the Princess, dwells in the highest and inwardest room: the senses are the guards and attendants on the Court, without whose aid nothing is admitted into the Presence: the supreme faculties, as will, memory, &c., are the Peers; the outward parts and inward affections are the Commons; violent passions are rebels to disturb the common peace. —*Bp. Hall.*

V. 22.—*Days of the Son of Man.* Whose day is this? Whose, but Christ's. And, for certain, it cannot be His

day, as He is "God from everlasting." "His goings out are from all eternity." Again, this is *dies factus* (Ps. cxviii. 24), a day, that is "made;" and such an adjunct cannot suit with Him, that was never made, but is the Everlasting One, before the world began. It is, therefore, that day, which was made with Him, when He was "made flesh." . . Yea, but S. Luke remembers us that there are many days belonging to the Son—*one of the days of the Son of Man.* What day of all those is this? Why, not one, but all those days, since the world received Him, and received Him with the glad tidings of salvation. All Evangelical days at large; every day, that we "Hear His voice, and harden not our hearts," is this day. It may be very well opposed to that dismal day, wherein our first parents transgressed and fell: that was a day, which the devil made, and "took his pastime in it," because the league of friendship was broken between God and man: but the Lord made a new Day, to repair us again by the mediation of Jesus Christ. S. John viii. 56; 2 Cor. vi. 2. —*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 27.—*Did eat.* The sinner's feast is no sooner served up, but Divine Justice is preparing to send up a reckoning after it; and the fearful expectation of this cannot but spoil the taste of the other. xvi. 23; Judg. iii. 20, 21; 1 Kings xx. 16; 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37.—*Gurnall.*

Destroyed them all. There is nothing renders us more afraid to die, than a soft voluputous life. Death must be bitter, where voluptuousness makes life sweet. Ecclus. xli. 1.—*Bp. Kidder.*

V. 28.—*They builded.* They will charm it (a guilty

conscience) with pleasures, and overwhelm it with business; as Cain, when his conscience was too rough and rigid for him, "went out from the Presence of the Lord," and, as it is observed, built cities, got some of his progeny to invent music; perhaps to still his tumultuous raving conscience, that the noise of the hammers and melody of the instruments might outsound the din within him, as in the sacrifices of Moloch. Gen. iv.; xi. 4; 1 Sam. xvi. 16.—*Dr. Hammond.*

Men will be buying and selling, building and planting, burying their hearts in earthly things, when the earth, the scene of their anxiety, will be melting beneath them. Men will be hurrying to strife and battle, when the very stage of their contention will be rent asunder by the last convulsions of nature; when the din of arms shall be silenced by the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God. It is, when the earth shall be ripe for the vintage of God, that the order shall be suddenly given, "Thrust in the sickle, and reap." Dan. xii. 4; 2 Thess. v. 1–4.—*R. Hall.*

Are these things evil? Yes; they are evil, unless they are good; they are evil, unless they are become good; they are evil, unless Christ sanctifies them; and then, and not till then, they are good. In all things then we must Spiritualize this world. I Tim. iv. 4.—*J. H. Newman.*

V. 29.—*Destroyed them all;* twice declared, in order to fix our minds on the certainty of the horrible punishment; the *all* corresponding with the like expression of

universality at xiv. 24; "I say unto you, that *none* of those men, that were bidden, shall taste of my supper? Conf. xxi. 25, and S. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.—*J. Ford.*

Be not offended, O my soul, if the same doctrine be often delivered unto thee; if the same precept, like the sword in Paradise, which have turned every way, doth hunt and haunt thee, tracing thee, which way soever thou turnest: rather conclude, that thou art deeply concerned in the practice thereof; which God hath thought fit should be so frequently inculcated unto thee. Phil. iii. 1.—*T. Fuller.*

V. 32.—Lot's wife who, having been set free, looked back, contrary to the command, forfeited her past deliverance. Let us not regard the things behind, whither the devil recalls, but the things before, whither Christ calls. S. Jude 5, 6. Phil. iii. 13.—*S. Cyprian.*

The wavering and amaze of others, that stand *on the plain* (with Lot's wife) looking about, and cannot tell, whether to go forward to *little Zoar*, or back again to the ease of Sodom, show plainly, that Lot's wife is forgotten, and this is a needful *memento; Remember Lot's wife.* If then it be ours, and so nearly concern us, let us see what is the worth of these five syllables. . . Yet it is not needless, but right requisite, that we, which are the "Lord's Remembrancers," put you in mind, that as perseverance is the Queen of virtues, because it alone wins the crown; so is it also, because Satan designs chiefly against it; for that all his malice, and all his practices, are against it: the more careful need we to be, to carry in

our eye this example; which God grant we may, and that our hearts may seriously regard, and our memories carefully keep it; that this *pillar* may prop our weakness, and this *salt* season our sacrifice, that it may be remembered, and accepted, and revealed, in the Day of the Lord. Ex. xiv. 15.—*Bp Andrewes.*

God strikes some, that He may warn all. Josh. vii. 26; Acts v. 11; Prov. xix. 25.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 34.—Their being thus found in the undisturbed pursuit of their ordinary business in life, strongly marks their insensibility to the danger of the impending judgment of God, and consequently their unbelief in God's Word. The *bed* seems to lead our thoughts to the state of the slothful, and the *field* to the state of the diligent; or, the latter may refer to the quick at the Resurrection-day, and the former to those, who shall awake out of their graves. Ex. vii. 23; Heb. xi.; 1 Thess. v.—*J. Ford.*

V. 37.—The literal and prophetic sense is plain: the *body* is the dead and rotting carcase of God's rejected people, and the *eagles* the gathering together of the Roman armies to devour. Much diversity of interpretation attends the figurative meaning. S. Gregory and S. Augustine understand by the *body*, Heaven, and by eagles, the Saints of God. S. Jerome by *body* understands Christ's sufferings; Origen sees in it the Church, and in the eagles the consent of the doctors and early fathers. Others apply it to the Cross and to believers, and, more particularly, to the Body of the Lord, the food of our souls in the Holy Eucharist. We are reminded of a passage in

Dr. Donne (Ser. S. John viii. 15) : "The rivers of Paradise did not all run one way, and yet they flowed from one head. The sentences of the Scripture flow all from one head, from the Holy Ghost, and yet they seem to present divers senses, and to admit divers interpretations." Gen. ii. 10.—*J. Ford.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 1.—Longing desire prayeth always, though the tongue be silent. If thou art ever longing, thou art ever praying. When stayeth prayer? When desire groweth cold.—*S. Augustine.*

As the trumpets of prayer must be loud, so they must be lasting. These *cries* are *day and night* (ver. 7); instant and constant prayers. Strength and length of devotion are the two wings of prayer. We must not have Bethulian devotions (Judith vii.); if God will not deliver us in five days, we will give over our prayers. Gen. xxxii. 26; Hos. xii. 4.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

Not to faint. What seems less than for a Christian to pray? Yet this cannot be performed aright without a princely spirit; as Jacob is said to have behaved himself, like a Prince, when he did but pray; for which he came out of the field God's Banneret. Gen. xxxii. 28; Ps. li. 12.—*Gurnall.*

Pray and *stay* are two Blessed monosyllables. Ps. xxvii. 13, 14.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 2.—Religion in a Magistrate strengthens his authority, because it procures veneration, and gains a reputation to it; and in all the affairs of this world so much reputation is so much real power. xxiii. 50–52; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

In a State, nothing is more requisite than to preserve to every office, yea, to the meanest, a good repute. For the first step to disorder is the contempt of Magistracy; and that, as well of the lowest degree, as of the more exalted. Acts xxiii. 5; S. Jude 8.—*Lord Capel.*

V. 7.—This argument *à fortiori* corresponds with that used before; "If ye, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (xi. 13). If an *unjust* judge was moved by the importunity of the widow, how much more shall our "Righteous Father" in heaven be prevailed upon by our entreaties, to deliver us from our great adversary?—*J. Ford.*

His elect, which cry, &c. How absurd are they, who make this profane collection "I am elected; therefore it skilleth not, whether I serve God." Thou vain man, He, that elected to the end, elected to the means; yea, the election, mentioned in my text, is unto this service; for, when thou art elected into the Church, thou art elected to be a Priest; thy person is elected to be a Temple; and prayer is that Sacrifice, which every man must offer in that house of prayer. Acts xxvii. 24, 31; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 S. Pet. i. 2.—*Bp. Lake.*

There often comes a *long* and sharp winter, between the sowing time of prayer, and the reaping. Eccl. xi. 6. —*Gurnall.*

V. 8.—If *faith* fails, prayer ceases; for who prays for what he does not believe? S. James v. 15.—*S. Augustine.*

Not only the word *faith*, but also charity, and godliness, and religion, signify sometimes particular graces; and sometimes they suppose universally, and mean congregations and unions of graces, as is evident to them, that read the Scriptures with observation. Now, when justification is attributed to *faith*, or salvation to godliness, they are to be understood in the aggregate sense: for—that I may give but one instance of this—when S. Paul speaks of faith, as it is a particular grace, and separate from the rest, he also does separate it from all possibility of bringing us to Heaven: "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." When faith includes charity, it will bring us to heaven; when it is alone, when it is without charity, it will do nothing at all. 2 S. Pet. i. 5–8; Gal. v. 6.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 9.—They are ever the likeliest thus to *despise others*, that conceit something in themselves more than in others. Wealth, honour, strength, beauty, birth, friends, alliance, authority, power, wit, learning, eloquence, reputation, any trifle, can leaven our thoughts (partial as they are towards ourselves), and swell us, and heave us up above our brethren: and because we think we do overtop them, we think we may overlook them too, and despise them, as vulgar and contemptible. 1 Sam. xvii. 42; Eccl. ix. 16; Ps. cxix. 141.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

Nothing hinders our own Salvation more, than to deny Salvation to all, but ourselves. 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7.—*Dr. Donne.*

V. 10.—*To pray.* Sometimes, when he had occasion

to go into the city, and saw slender congregations at Prayer, he would much wonder at his countrymen, that had so little love to holy Prayer; but when he heard of any, that would not go to Church to prayer, unless it were accompanied with a sermon, he would not scruple to say, he scarce thought them Christians; and never deemed any divine to be really famous, and successful in his preaching, who could not prevail with his people to come frequently to Sacraments and prayers. . . He reminded his people, that, after our Blessed Saviour had cast out the sheep and oxen, yet He still called His house, the *house of Prayer;* to show that, though those sacrifices were at an end, yet this should never end; and therefore the Apostles themselves, after His death, resorted to His Temple at the Hours of Prayer. xix. 46; Ps. lxxii. 15; Acts iii. 1.—*Dr. Plume.* (Life of Bp. Hacket.)

V. 11.—He should, at least, have said *many men.* For what does this mean, *other men,* save to exclude all but himself? He therefore says, "I alone am righteous; all the world are sinners." Isa. ii. 11, 17.—*S. Augustine.*

Out of thine own mouth shalt thou be judged, thou deceitful Pharisee; *that* shall cast thee. . . Art thou not an *extortioner* in the highest degree, that goest about to extort and wring from God Himself His most precious treasure, His Glory, which He will not "give to another?" S. Matt. xii. 37.—*Dr. Dyke.*

Even as this publican. How beautiful is the humility of David! (Ps. cxxxix.) He cannot but speak of the wicked in terms of indignation; he cannot but hate

the haters of his God; but he seems immediately to recollect, and check himself; "Try *me*, O Lord, and seek the ground of *my* heart," &c. Precisely in the same spirit of inward humility and watchfulness, Abraham, pleading before God in prayer for guilty depraved Sodom, fails not to speak of himself, as being "Dust and ashes." How far was this Pharisee, whose boast was, that he was a child of Abraham, from speaking the words, and doing the works, of the noble Patriarch! He not only does not pray himself, but insults the publican, who does. S. John viii. 37–40.—*J. Ford.*

V. 13.—Our spots never appear so clearly, as when we place them before the infinite light of God's purity and goodness; and we never seem less in our own eyes, than when we look down upon ourselves from on high. Oh, how little, how nothing do all those shadows of perfection then appear, for which we are wont to value ourselves! Job xlii. 5, 6.—*Scougal.*

"*To me*, the sinful one." For, as the other had singled himself out, as the most eminent of Saints, or indeed as the one holy one in the world, so the publican singles himself out, as "the chief of Sinners," the man, in whom all sins have met.—*R. C. Trench.*

V. 14.—He asks for *mercy;* he obtains justification: so his brother publican, Zaccheus, wished merely to *see* Christ pass by, and he receives Him, as a guest. Thus also the penitent thief prays for a mere "remembrance," and is admitted into "Paradise." God is exceeding merciful and gracious. xix. 4; Eph. iii. 20.—*J. Ford.*

It is much to be observed, that this most Christian axiom, *Whosoever exalteth himself*, &c., is repeated in words, or substance, seven times in the Gospels (S. Matt. xviii. 4; xx. 26; xxiii. 12; S. Luke xiv. 11: xviii. 14; xxii. 26; S. John xiii. 14). It was the manner of our Lord, in the course of His Ministry, which called upon Him to address so great a variety of persons, under as varying circumstances, to repeat His instructions; and it is more particularly observable, that what at one time He delivered to His Apostles, He afterwards declared to the Seventy, and lastly, to all His disciples. What He first said in private, He proceeded to assert in public; what was said in Galilee, or Peræa, was repeated in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and in the Temple. S. Matt. x. 16–32; S. Luke x. 3–12; xii. 1–12; S. Matt. x. 37, 38; S. Luke xiv. 26, 27; S. Matt. vi. 5–13; S. Luke xi. 1–13; xiv. 16; S. Matt. xiii. 1.—*J. Ford.*

V. 15.—We have been accustomed to allege these words (S. Mark x. 13, 14), in behalf of the Catholick practice of Infant Baptism; and rightly, for they have been always so understood by the Church; and the voice of the Church Universal is that of the Lord. The Anabaptist and the Socinian are obviously so far wrong, that they urge that the word used does not denote infants; since, although that, employed by S. Matthew and S. Mark, may be applied to children old enough to know good and evil, *S. Luke* was directed by God to use one, which can only signify infants, sucklings in its strictest sense. And thus by taking together the teaching of the different Gospels, we learn that children of all ages may be brought to

Christ in Baptism, not infants only; but, if infancy should (in disobedience to the Church) have been unhappily passed over, that they may still be brought. Ps. viii. 2.—*Plain Sermons.*

V. 16.—I will not contend about it, whether Baptized infants have a secret imperceptible habit of faith: I am sure there is innocency of life in them, instead of faith. They, that are of age to come to the knowledge of faith, must bring their own faith with them to the Font; but for infants—they have privilege to be in Church Communion, by the faith of the Church, wherein they were born. Eph. vi. 4.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 18.—If it should be asked, for what reason Christ put this question, "Why callest thou Me *good?*" I answer; for the same reason that He asked the Pharisees, why "David in Spirit called Him *Lord?*" And that was to try, if they were able to account for it. . . And, when this Ruler was called upon to explain his meaning, for that God only was *good*, he should have replied in the words of S. Thomas; "My Lord and my God!" which would have been a nobler instance of faith, and have cleared up the whole difficulty. If the case be considered, this man was a very proper subject for such a trial. Fully convinced of his own sufficiency, he comes to Christ, in the presence of His disciples, to know what *good thing* he might do to merit everlasting life: whence our Saviour takes occasion to correct his mistake, as to the nature of *goodness;* and, having tried this *good* and perfect man in a tender point, sent him away grievously dissatisfied. S. John x. 36.—*Wm. Jones.*

V. 19.—The true meaning of Christ's words is to be gathered from the cause of their being spoken.—*S. Hilary.*

V. 21.—Moral virtues do not belong to Christian men, as Christians; but they pertain to them, as men.—*Hooker.*

The devil never tempts us with more success, than when he tempts us with a sight of our own good actions. xx. 20, 21.—*Bp. Wilson.*

V. 22.—Since much wealth too often proves a snare and an incumbrance in the Christian's race, let him lighten the weight, by "dispersing abroad and giving to the poor;" whereby he will both soften the pilgrimage of his fellow travellers, and speed his own way the faster. Hab. ii. 6.—*Toplady.*

Where the treasure is, there is the heart; where the heart, there the happiness; and where the happiness, there the God.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

After all, that is said about unnecessary strictness, where was the man found, when he came to die, who did not wish that he had been more strict, and had not rather erred on the side of self-denial, than of sin?—*H. Martyn.*

V. 23.—The rule never faileth. True obedience, as it disputeth not the Command, but obeyeth cheerfully, so neither doth it divide the Command, but obeyeth equally. S. Mark vi. 20; S. James ii. 10, 12.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

Some of the greatest advances in perfection have been granted to God's family in this manner; by the after growth of sayings and examples, which seemed at first to

have been utterly thrown away. Our Lord's saying to the rich young man did but send him away *sorrowful;* but, within a few months, hundreds in Jerusalem remembered and obeyed it, bringing their goods, and laying them at the Apostles' feet (Acts iv. 34–37). Some centuries afterwards, the same saying fell accidentally, as men speak, on the ear of another rich man; and he presently *sold all that he had, took up the cross,* and became a prime pattern of the strictest way of life in the Church; and all generations honour him by the name of S. Anthony. Not long after, the memory of his example moved yet another young man to do that, which ended in his embracing a religious life in like manner. This was no other, than the great S. Augustine. Isa. lv. 11; Eccl. xi. 1, 6.—*Keble.*

O Lord! Thou searcher of hearts, Thou knowest what it is sticks with us, and the secret concealment, whereby we impose upon ourselves and others. Let us not *go away sorrowful,* when it is ript open by Thee, nor grieve to part with the most favoured corruption, when we perceive it is that, which hinders us from following Thee. In vain we call Thee *good,* if we dispute Thy precepts; in vain we inquire after *eternal life,* if we are not prepared to part with all for it. Oh, make us so to call Thee *good,* as to think all good, which Thou ordainest; so to inquire after Thy Will, as to be ready to sacrifice our own, and all we hold dear, to it. Ps. cxix. 128.—*Austin.*

V. 24.—*Very sorrowful.* We know not how much we love the world, till we find pain and difficulty in parting with its good things—*Bp. Wilson.*

V. 27.—Faith lodges this principle in the soul, that God is infinite. Faith is strengthened with the strength of the power of that God, that it lays hold upon. As the ivy is strong by the strength of the oak, that it grasps upon, so faith is strong by the strength of that God, that it grasps upon. Gen. xv. 1; Heb. xi. 19.—*W. Bridge.*

V. 28.—It is not so difficult for a man to leave all these things; but it is exceeding difficult for him to leave himself (to be dead to the smallest wish of possessing them). . . Regard is not had to the amount of what we forsake, but to our will in forsaking it. 2 Cor. viii. 5.—*S. Gregory.*

V. 29.—*For the kingdom of heaven's sake.* Our principles are the springs of our actions; our actions the springs of our happiness and misery. Too much care therefore cannot be employed in forming our principles. S. Matt. vii. 18, 19.—*P. Skelton.*

V. 32.—Christ is large, in the report of His ignominy; but short, in that of His glory: for He delivered five points, as concerning His humiliation; but He remembers only two, yea, for the matter only but one, touching His exaltation. S. Mark x. 45.—*Diez.*

V. 33.—*Three days.* That, which is most remarkable therein, seems to be the wisdom of God, choosing a convenient distance of time, after our Saviour's death, for His Resurrection. He stayed so long, that it might be thoroughly certain our Saviour was really dead, beyond all possibility of recovery by natural means. . . He deferred it no longer, both because there was no reason for doing so, and because it was fit, that, while men's

memories were fresh, their passions warm, their fancies busy, their mouths open in discourse, concerning His death; while the designed witnesses were present (both enemies watching, and friends attending the event), it was, I say, then most fitting that our Saviour should arise. Eph. i. 8.—*Dr. Barrow.*

He made this day the most memorable Feast, that ever the sun shined upon. It was a *third day*, when Joseph released his brethren out of prison. On the third day, in the morning, after the people had come to Mount Sinai, the Law of God was delivered. On the third day, Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood before Ahasuerus, and desired him to be good to her nation. On the third day, Abraham came to the place, where his faith was tried, and Isaac was restored back alive, when the sacrificing knife had been at his throat. To come near to the mark, the third day Jonas was cast safe upon the land out of the belly of the whale; and that was the sign, Christ gave to the Jews, able to convince all infidelity. Gen. xlii. 18; Ez. xix. 16; Esther v. 1; Gen. xxii. 4.—*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 34.—We shall never think on the Cross, as we ought, except we begin to have some true love of that Divine Sufferer in our hearts. To fix our eyes in earnest on the Cross, we want love and faith too; faith, to represent to our hearts, as true and real, the things, which happened at Jerusalem so long ago; love, to hinder us from withdrawing our mind's eye from things so painful and distressing. It is want of faith and love, which hinders us from true and thorough contemplation

of the sufferings of our Divine Saviour; even as the Saints' overflowing faith and love have ever caused them to give themselves up to steady meditation on those sufferings; to realize them in every way, and make them their own. 2 Cor. v. 14.—*Plain Sermons.*

V. 35.—All of us are *blind* by nature; all of us *are by the high-way side*, exposed to the noise, the publicity, the temptation, the weariness, the sorrow of this life; *sitting* too, as seeking rest in the world. Oh, may we beg of Jesus to grant us deliverance; for, though He knows all our wants, yet will He know them from *ourselves.* Ezek. xxxvi. 37.—*J. Ford.*

V. 41.—We admire the mercy of God and His humility in forgetting His dignity, by stooping thus low to a poor man. Where was ever a Master, that desired to be informed of the *will* of his slave, in order to execute it? —*Rodriguez.*

The man's *faith* shone forth in his importunity, thus illustrating Verse 8; for prayer is the child of faith. It resisted opposition, and the attempts made to silence prayer; and it was more particularly evidenced in this, that, whereas the people spake to him of *Jesus of Nazareth* (Verse 37), he persisted in addressing the Lord, as the *Son of David*, the true Messiah.—*J. Ford.*

V. 42.—As the sun can be seen only by its own light, so Christ can be known only by His own Spirit. The sun can make dark things clear; but it cannot make a blind man to see them. But herein is the excellency of this Divine Sun, that He illuminates not only the object,

but the faculty; doth not only open the mysteries of His Kingdom, but opens blind eyes to behold them. Ps. xxxvi. 9.—*Abp. Leighton.*

The beginning and the end of this Chapter meet together, in showing us the blessedness of importunate supplication. The oppressed widow and the blind beggar "teach us how to pray." *Abp. Usher* well observes (Serm. Heb. iv. 16), that "Many will pray to God, as prayer is a duty; but few use it, as a means to attain a blessing." In this latter view lies chiefly the strength and joy of a holy persevering importunity.—*J. Ford.* S. Matt. vii. 7. 8.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 4.—Being forgetful of his own dignity and estate, *running before*, as a man of mean condition, he might easily divine, that all, which should see this thing, would scoff at him; that he, a chief and rich man, should climb a tree, like boys, whence he might see Christ passing by. But his love and desire of seeing Jesus, and especially an impulse of the Holy Ghost, took away all his modesty from him. . . *To-day I must abide in thine house.* A wonderful thing! We read in the Gospel that the Lord, being invited by others, went to them; but we never read that of His own accord He came to their feast, as He did to this Prince of the Publicans: so faith always obtained more than it wished. Zaccheus desired to *see* Jesus; now he hath Him his guest. Christ requires *haste*, that his readiness to bestow faith may appear to all. 2 Sam. vi. 14, 16, 20–22; Acts viii. 30.—*Edw. Leigh.*

To see him. There is a fatal error, which prevents multitudes from enjoying the full and felicitating effects of Christianity; that is, that they deem it a dry catalogue of duties, or, at best, a collection of truths, awful indeed and sublime, but by no means attractive and engaging. Ver. 6; S. John i. 37.—*Bp. Jebb.*

V. 5.—*He looked up, &c.* Just as if, without His turning His eyes in that direction, He would not have seen him; for, even when absent, He had seen from afar

Nathanael under a like tree: but, when He saw him, He saw him with an eye to pardon; He regarded him with a look of grace: His look gave him life; His very gaze was Salvation. xxii. 61; S. John i. 48.—*Pet. Chrysologus.*

Zaccheus *ran*, and *climbed up the tree*, and manifested great zeal; and yet the Lord said unto him, "*Make haste.*" When, at our best estate, are we as zealous, as we ought to be, in the pursuit and service of our God? When do we not need some fresh stimulus, some renewed awakening voice, to urge us on in "the race that is set before us?" Lord, increase our faith; Lord, increase our zeal! Heb. xii. 4; 1 S. John v. 13.—*J. Ford.*

I must abide at thy house. The first motions of Grace prevent our wills, and beget our prayers; but the after-supplies of Grace are obtained by prayer. Preventing grace, it is the root of prayer, but subsequent grace is the fruit of prayer. In the first gift of grace, He bids Himself to us, as He did to Zaccheus, but, for after-accessions of grace, He looks to be invited, ere He comes unto us. At our first conversion, He knocks at our doors; in subsequent grace, by prayer we knock at His door. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Rev. iii. 20; S. Matt. vii. 7.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 7.—None made greater allowance for human nature, for the various tempers and educations of men; and he was seldom so severe on any, as on himself. His conversation was not soured with constant and melancholy complaints of the impieties of the age, and railing at those freedoms of life, which, though he did not practise himself, yet he would not condemn, as crimes, in those,

who used them. He rejoiced, when he could speak well of any; and, when he was forced to discommend, it was always done with concern and regret. S. Matt. vii. 1, 2; Gal. vi. 1.—*Archdeacon Hamilton's Life of Bonnell.*

V. 8.—*My goods.* Zaccheus gives *half* his goods to the poor; but it is half of *his, his own;* for there might be goods in his house, which were none of his. Therefore, in the same instrument, he passes that scrutiny, *If I have taken any thing unjustly, I restore him fourfold.* First, let that, that was ill-gotten, be deducted and restored; and then, of the rest, which is truly thine own, give cheerfully. Micah vi. 10.—*Dr. Donne.*

Defer no charities till death. He that doth so, is rather liberal of another man's, than of his own. Eccl. ix. 10.—*Lord Bacon.*

What thou hast taken unlawfully, restore speedily; for the sin in taking it is repeated every minute thou keepest it: if thou canst, restore it in kind; if not, in value; if it may be, restore it to the party; if not, to God: the poor is God's receiver.—*F. Quarles.*

As, by the art of medicine, things hot are cured by things cold, and *vice versâ;* so our Lord proposes to us remedies, which are the very contrary to our diseases. He bids the wanton practise continence; the penurious, *liberality;* the passionate, gentleness; the proud, humility. Eph. iv. 28.—*S. Gregory.*

We are taught ways of going to Heaven, without forsaking our sins; of repentance, without *restitution;* of

being in charity, without hearty forgiveness and without love; of believing our sins to be pardoned, before they are mortified; of trusting in Christ's Death, without conformity to His life; of being in God's favour upon the only account of being of such an opinion, and that, when we are once in, we can never be out. Jer. v. 31.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 9.—*This day, &c.* There are perhaps no two promises of God's Word more generally known, and in people's mouths, and yet more generally and dangerously misunderstood by being wrested from their context, than these; "*Though your sins be as scarlet,*" *&c.* Isa. i. 18, and "*The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,*" 1 S. John i. 7. Now, both these promises are strictly conditional; yet, in the too common acceptation of both, the conditions are lost sight of. In regard to the first; mark the introductory words, "Come *now,*" that is (as shewn by the preceding Verses), *after* you have forsaken your sins, and made restitution, and done well: in regard to the second; "*If* ye walk in the light, &c." Oh, how important it is, that we should read the Scriptures practically with singleness of eye; that we should receive them in their entireness; that we should be on our guard against those plausible misinterpretations, which administer false comfort to our souls, are "contrary to God's Word," and subversive of the main design of Christ's Gospel. 2 S. Pet. iii. 16.—*J. Ford.*

Our Lord did not say, to this man, but *to this house;* because He knew that, though Zaccheus alone had com-

mitted the sin, yet he would not be the only one to suffer by, and bear the penalty of, his unjust gains. Jer. xxii. 13.—*Segneri.*

V. 12.—Be sure that you make conscience of the great duties, that you are to perform in your families. Teach your children and *servants* the knowledge and fear of God; do it early and late, in season and out of season. Pray with them daily and fervently; remember Daniel's example (chap. vi.), and the command (1 Thess. v. 17); read the Scriptures and good books to them; restrain them from sin; keep not a servant, that will not learn, and be ruled. Neighbours, I charge you, as you will shortly answer the contrary before the Lord your Judge, that there be never a family among you, that shall neglect these great duties. If you cannot do what you would, yet do what you can: especially see, that the Lord's Day be wholly spent in these exercises. To spend it in idleness or sports is to consecrate it to your flesh, and not to God; and far worse than to spend it in your trades.—*Richard Baxter.*

V. 13.—*Beneficium propter officium.* In the same court-roll of Heaven we are made both proprietaries, and stewards. 1 S. Pet. iv. 10.—*Farindon.*

No burden is more heavy, or temptation more dangerous, than to have time lie on one's hands; the idle man's brain being not only the devil's shop, but his kingdom too; a model and an appendage unto hell, which is a place given up to torment and to mischief. Ps. xxxvi. 4; 2 Sam. xi. 1, 2.—*Dr. Hammond.*

No man is a better merchant, than he, who lays out his time upon God, and his money on the poor.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

Jacob saw Angels ascending and descending, but none standing still. S. John i. 51.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 14.—These words (Ps. ii. 3), supposed to be spoken by the powers in arms against Messiah, discover to us the true ground of opposition, namely, the unwillingness of rebellious nature to submit to the obligations of Divine laws, which cross the interests, and lay a restraint upon the desires of men. Corrupt affections are the most inveterate enemies of Christ; and their language is, *We will not have this man to reign over us.* Doctrines would be readily believed, if they involved in them no precepts; and the Church may be tolerated by the world, if she will only give up her Discipline. Rom. viii. 7.—*Bp. Horne.*

There is a threefold submission to God: first, of our carnal hearts to His Holiness; secondly, of our proud hearts to His Mercy; and thirdly, of our revolting hearts to His Sovereignty. S. James iv. 7.—*Dr. Manton.*

V. 17.—Denial of merit taketh not away reward of mercy.—S. Matt. xxv. 37–41.—*Bp. Babington.*

V. 18.—What then is the consummation of man's goodness, but to co-operate with the benevolent purposes of his Maker, by forming the habit of his mind to a constant ambition of improvement; which, enlarging its

appetite, in proportion to the requisitions already made, may correspond with the increase of his capacities, in every stage of a progressive virtue, in every period of an endless existence? Eph. iv. 15, 16.—*Bp. Horsley.*

V. 20.—The former do not applaud themselves, but ascribe both principal and interest to God. Only he, that did least, comes in with a brag, and tells his Lord what he had done. Least doers are the greatest boasters. —*Gurnall.*

It is fearful to sin; more fearful to delight in sin; yet more to defend it. Gen. iii.; Mal. iii. 13.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 22.—Oh, how often have we occasion to repent of our attempts to justify ourselves. xiv. 18–20.—*Tertullian.*

The murmuring speeches of men are like arrows, shot up in defiance of Heaven, which always fall down again on their own heads. Ps. vii. 16.—*Abp. Bramhall.*

V. 23.—True wisdom consists in knowing how to make every thing conducive to our Salvation. xvi. 8, 9.—*Bp. Wilson.*

If thou hide thy treasure upon earth, how canst thou expect to find it in Heaven? Canst thou hope to be a sharer, where thou hast reposed no stock? What thou givest to God's Glory and thy soul's health, is laid up in Heaven, and is only thine; that alone, which thou exchangest or hidest upon earth, is lost.—*F. Quarles.*

V. 24.—He, that employeth not his spiritual gift to the

use, for which it was given, to the *profit* of the Church, he hath *de jure* forfeited it to the Giver: and we have sometimes known Him *de facto* to *take* the forfeiture; as from the unprofitable servant in the Gospel *(Take the talent from him).* We have sometimes seen the experiment of it. Men of excellent parts, by slackening their zeal, to have lost their very gifts; and by neglecting the use, to have lost the principal; finding a sensible decay in those powers, which they were slothful to bring into act. It is a just thing with "the Father of lights," when He hath lighted any man a candle, by bestowing spiritual gifts upon him, and lent him a candlestick too, whereon to set it, by providing him a stay in the Church, if that man shall then hide his candle under a bushel, and envy the light and comfort of it to them, that are in the house, either to remove his candlestick, or to put out his candle in obscurity. S. Matt. v. 15; 1 S. Pet. iv. 10.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

V. 25.—To envy Christ's dispensing of His Grace, to whom, and in what measure, He pleases, is unbecoming a Christian; to rejoice in other's happiness, is to do, as the Angels in heaven. Thou shouldest not have an envious eye, because Christ hath a bountiful hand. vi. 36.—*Chr. Love.*

V. 26.—*Unto every one that hath, &c.* We may receive the heavenly gift in vain (2 Cor. vi. 1); the negligent always do so; but, if we stir it up by exercise and use, we make it spread and improve, and secure its aids to the full accomplishment of our duty: so that

Grace and the soul are like two free agents, combining discretionally to the same effect; the one acting out of duty, and the other out of compassion, and both requiring mutual excitements and mutual endeavours. Human diligence engages Grace, because it is not consistent with the laws of mercy that they, who are sincere, should miscarry for want of assistance; and Grace engages diligence, because it is not consistent with the laws of virtue that they, who are slothful, should either succeed or be assisted.—*Dean Young.*

V. 27.—The Lord hears all our rebellious words, and knows all the secret conspiracies of men against Him. In the sentence, here pronounced, He condemns them "out of their own mouths," as He had just done "the wicked servant." He casts their very words into their teeth. Refer to verse 14; S. Jude 15.—*J. Ford.*

V. 35.—O glorious King of heaven and earth! how dost Thou humble Thyself, even in the day of Thy triumph, to ride, like a poor mean man, on an ass, a beast of the yoke and burden, and that, too, none of his own. Blush now, my soul, at thine own pride and be confounded at thy vain curiosity. The Lord might have called the Cherubins to bear Him on their wings, and dazzled with their brightness the eyes of the beholders; but He chose to enter, as the Prince of meekness, and the Saviour of the poor.—*Austin.*

V. 37.—There is great beauty in this description of His meeting the multitudes, praising God, *at the descent of the mount,* as if they thereby acknowledged their

spiritual deliverer to come to them from Heaven. i. 78. —*Origen.*

This very multitude, so eager to-day to exalt Christ to the highest in their loud *Hosannahs*, are as fair on Friday to exalt Him to the Cross by their louder cryings. He would yet suffer them to give Him honour, that He might show us what all worldly honour is, how fickle, how inconstant; how vain it is to puff up ourselves with the breath of men, to feed ourselves with their empty air. They, that are now ready to lick the dust of some great man's feet, and spread not their garments only, but their very bodies, for him to go over, will, within a few days, upon a little change, be as ready to trample upon him, if he command anything, that pleases not their humour, or crosses their private interests and designs. Acts. xiv. 11, 19.—*Dr. Mark Frank.*

All the parts of this lower creation bear a part here in rendering homage to the Son of God; the inanimate, Verse 40; the brute, Verse 30; and man, the rational, accountable, immortal man, whom He came to redeem. Ps. cxlv. 10.—*J. Ford.*

V. 38.—Oh, how unlike the cry, "Away with Him; Crucify Him!" to this—*Blessed is He, that cometh in the Name of the Lord!* What a difference between this salutation of the *King of Israel*, and the avowal—"We have no King, but Cæsar!" What a contrast between their green boughs, and the Cross; their flowers strewn in the way, and the Crown of thorns; the person, for whose sake other men's garments were spread, and Him, who is

stripped naked of His own! Alas! the bitterness of our sins, which needed such a bitterness as this, for their remission.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 39.—There is no need that we should *rebuke* them: their own zeal will soon cool of itself. Prov. xxvii. 14; S. Matt. xiii. 20, 21; S. John v. 35.—*J. Ford.*

V. 40.—If the Jews be silent, the Gentiles, who were like hard barren stones, and who worshipped wood and stones, being converted to Christ, would both praise and preach Him; and so the Centurion, and they, that were with him, when they had seen such wondrous signs, confessed, saying; "Truly this was the Son of God!" "Truly this was a righteous man!"—*Ludolphus.*

To the unenlightened man the world, and his own kind, may appear like "a reed shaken with the wind;" by the sensual man everything may be regarded, as the means and fuel of luxury: but to the Christian, whose eye has been purged, the sphere of whose vision has been enlarged by faith, the world is, as a prophet, that tells him of God; and he hears all nature, animate and inanimate, joining in the Choral Hymn of adoration and thanksgiving to its Creator. Hallelujah is the sound of the waves: and the mountains reply Hallelujah! Hallelujahs float along in the murmuring of the streams, in the whispering of the grove and forest; yea, even in the silent courses of the stars, his spirit hears the mystic Hallelujahs. 1 Cor. x. 26, 28.—*J. Hare.*

V. 41.—The good shepherd ought to weep within him-

self, before he urges others to weeping; to be racked with pain in his own secret thoughts, before he evinces his indignation at other men's sins; and to cherish sorrow in his own bosom, beyond what he inflicts on others. Jer. xxxi. 20; 2 Cor. ii. 4.—*Calvin.*

He, who is called to instruct souls, is called of God, and not by his own ambition. And what is this call, but an inward incentive of love, soliciting us to be zealous for the Salvation of our brethren? So often as he, who is engaged in preaching the Word, shall feel his inward man to be excited with Divine affections, so often let him assure himself that God is there, and that he is invited by Him to seek the good of souls. Jer. xx. 9; Acts xvii. 16.—*S. Bernard.*

V. 43.—The difference between our Lord's style of prophecy, and that of all other prophets, is this. He seems to speak with a clear steady perception of futurity, as if His eye was just as calmly fixed upon future events, as if the whole were a present occurrence. The prophets appear only to have a picture, or a strong delineation of their prominent features, and their imaginations became turbid and heated, agitated and confused.—*C. Wolfe.*

V. 44.—None can fail to be struck by the contrast between the scene itself (S. Mark xi. 1–10), and these solemn words. The branches of the palm-trees were still unwithered, and the echo of the Hosannahs had not died away, when our Lord was thus *weeping* over the departed glory of Jerusalem. And why was this? Doubtless, it was, because He could read the heart, and saw that the

feelings of the people were, in themselves, more frail and perishable, even than the outward symbols, which they had called forth. . . God grant that their example may not speak in vain to ourselves! Let us be careful at all times, and especially on solemn seasons, such as this, that the stirrings of His Spirit may not leave our hearts empty, when they pass away, and so open them to a fresh invasion of Satan (S. Luke xi. 25), and prepare us to crucify our Saviour by some new act of sin.—*Adams.*

V. 46.—Our Lord, when He purged the Temple, said, *It is written.* This, after His example, must be our rule. Reformation is then right, when corrupted Ordinances are reduced to their primitive institutions. S. Matt. xix. 8; 1 Cor. xi. 23.—*Dr. Dodd.*

The house of prayer. Let no preacher compare one Ordinance with another, as prayer with preaching, to the disparagement of either; but use both in their proper seasons, and according to their appointed order.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

The invidious comparison, against making which we are wisely cautioned by Bp. Taylor, is almost prevented by attention to what here immediately follows; "And He *taught daily* in the Temple" (S. Matt. xix. 6; Acts v. 42). Yet, this Temple was a *den of thieves.* Hence, let persons beware how they separate themselves from any branch of the Catholick Church, however corrupt, provided it retains the essentials of a Church, and has nothing sinful in its terms of Communion. S. Matt. xxiii. 1–3.—*J. Ford.*

A sin, acted in the Temple, was greater, than if the same had been committed by a Jew in his private dwelling; because the Temple was a consecrated place. The Saint is a consecrated person; his sin is the sin of Sacrilege, because he robs God of that, which is devoted to Him in an especial manner. 1 Cor. iii. 16.—*Gurnall.*

V. 48.—To me it belongs to instruct; to you it belongs to listen; to God it belongs to "give the increase." Gal. vi. 6.—*S. Cyril.*

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 4.—S. Ambrose, preaching on S. John the Baptist's Day, was a great deal troubled, where he should either begin, or end, his praises; for, whatsoever was eminent in almost all other is found in this one Saint, as being an Angel (Mal. iii. 1), a Prophet (S. Luke i. 76), an Apostle (S. John i. 6), an Evangelist (S. Mark i. 7), a Confessor, constantly teaching the truth, and patiently suffering for the same. His ingress into the world, his progress through it, and his egress out of it, were not without "a marvellous noise throughout all the countries of Jewry, and the coast about Jordan."—*Dean Boys.*

They be persuaded, &c. Nothing procureth love, like humility; nothing hate, like pride. The proud man walks among daggers pointed against him; whereas the humble and the affable have the people for their guard in dangers. To be humble to our superiors is duty; to our equals, courtesy; to our inferiors, nobleness. Divine justice will always vindicate itself upon the presumptuous; and is, indeed, said to fight against no sin, but pride. S. John i. 27; iii. 30, 31; Rev. xviii. 20.—*O. Feltham.*

V. 7.—They went away, most deservedly repulsed and put to confusion; and thus was fulfilled the word of the prophet in the Psalm, speaking in the Person of the Father: "I have ordained a lanthorn," (that is, this very

John) "for My Christ. I shall clothe His enemies with shame!" S. John i. 8.—*Beda.*

V. 11.—The Venerable Bede understands, by this other servant, David to be meant, who, he says, was sent after the commandment of the Law, by the music of his Psalmody to stir up the husbandmen to the exercise of good works; whom they rejected, saying, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse" (1 Kings xii. 16; 1 Sam. xx. 1). It appears, that the best historical comment on this Parable may be found in the speech of S. Stephen, himself a dying witness to its truth; he particularly dwells on their rejection of Moses, and concludes his earnest reproof by the general accusation; "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" &c. Acts vii. 49–52.—*J. Ford.*

V. 12.—Oh, the indulgent Providence of our God! How many ways has He contrived, to save us! How many messengers has He sent, to instruct our ignorance! How many ambassadors, to reclaim us to our duty! Sometimes He sends a blessing, to invite our love; and we abuse it into pride and wantonness; sometimes a cross, to check our vanity; and we turn it into murmuring and disobedience. What could an infinite power and goodness do, that He hath not done? What could the vilest ingratitude do, that we have not done? xiii. 34; Job xxxiv. 14.—*Austin.*

V. 13.—Observe, He first appointed His servants; afterwards, in distinction, His Son. Thence learn that

God, the Only Begotten Son, in the power of His own Divine Nature, has neither name, nor fellowship, in common with servants. Heb. i. 2.—*S. Ambrose.*

O Thou everlasting Wisdom, O Thou everlasting sweetness, grant that I may *see* Thee; seeing may love Thee; loving may admire Thee; admiring may imitate Thee; and imitating Thee may enjoy Thee; enjoying Thee may never be separated from Thee, but live in Thy light, and love, and glory, to all Eternity! S. John xii. 21.—*Dr. Horneck.*

V. 14.—*Come, let us kill him.* Bad company is the most dangerous of all temptations. For one man, who is led astray by love of vice, thousands are ruined by the seductions of others. Prov. i. 10–19; Acts xxiii. 12; 1 Cor. xv.—*Bowdler.*

V. 16.—Nathan shows us the way, how to call kings to repentance (2 Sam. xii). He catches King David's conscience with a Parable; hides the instrument, that must lance the sore. He conceals the weapon, saith S. Chrysostom, lest the patient should shrink from his remedy; he hides it, not under his garment, but under the cloak of a narrative.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 17.—There is an excellent analogy between the person of David, and Christ; as both were Kings. David was anointed to be a king, long before he was possessed of his kingdom; and so was our Saviour Christ anointed with the Holy Ghost, long before "He entered into His Glory." . . As King David first possessed only the tribe of Judah, and after some years the ten tribes; even

so our Saviour Christ at first possessed only the Jews, and after some time enlarged His Church unto the Gentiles. David, being possessed of his kingdom, spent many years in repressing the foes of his kingdom, Philistines, Ammonites, Syrians, &c., and at length sate down in peace, and ruled with justice and judgment in much prosperity; even so our Saviour Christ, though ascending into Heaven and reigning there, yet shall be, until the general resurrection, "subduing His enemies under His feet," and freeing His Church from troubles and calamities: when that is done, then He shall rule and reign with His Church in much peace and joy. V. 42, 43; 1 Cor. xv. 28.—*Bp. Lake.*

V. 20.—*Feign themselves, &c.* There is nothing under heaven more hateful or more reproachful unto God, than to make Religion serve turns, to have piety lackey and dance attendance, and to be a drudge and groom to private ends; to make it a cloak to policy, a varnish to rotten wood, silver dross to a broken potsherd. Acts vi. 11–14.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

Take hold of His words. The moderation and government of the tongue, though it be a general duty (for there is no man's tongue, so lawless, as to be exempted from the dominion of right reason and religion), yet it is a duty, wherein the Pastor or Teacher hath a peculiar concern. The Minister's tongue is a chief tool and instrument of his profession; that, which *ex officio* he must often make use of; he lies under a necessity of speaking much and often; and the wise man tells us, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." And certainly there is scarce any consideration more powerful, to deter a man from under-

taking the office of a teacher, than this—how extremely difficult and almost impossible it is, for a man, that speaks much and often, so to govern his tongue, as to speak nothing, that either is itself unfit, or in an unfit time, or after an undue manner. And yet how highly every teacher is concerned so to do! S. John vii. 46; Prov. x. 19.—*Bp. Bull.*

V. 21.—Words sweet as honey, smooth as milk; gall in the heart, and in deeds deceit. They, who persecute without a sword, are the most formidable of all persecutors; who assail our minds, not with threats, but with flatteries. Ps. lv. 21; Rom. iii. 13.—*S. Ambrose.*

V. 22.—*It is lawful, &c.* It is the want of conscience, the neglect of conscience, in the common and known ways of our duty, which have raised so many needless cases of conscience; which, if men had not hearkened to their lusts, had never shown their head. 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. —*Farindon.*

V. 23.—To *tempt* another is worse than to sin thyself. When you tempt, you do that, which you cannot undo with your repentance. Gen. iii. 14.—*Gurnall.*

V. 25.—If the *image and superscription* were a good ground, why coin should be paid unto Cæsar, where God's Image is found, there is as good a reason, that that should be rendered unto Him. Now God's Image is found in us by nature; for we were made according to His Image, so that all we receive from Him we owe unto Him by the Law of creation. A second way is God's Image in us by Grace: for our regeneration is but a second creation,

wherein we are reformed unto that Image, according to which God at first created us. All then is due unto God, a second time, by the Law of our Redemption; so that, whether we look to our heart, our mind, our soul, or strength, it may be demanded of us; "*What* hast thou, which thou hast not received?" And, if we have received it all, the exaction is but reasonable, if He demands of thee *the whole*, who made thee, who made thee, again, *all* that thou art. 1 Cor vi. 19, 20.—*Bp. Lake.*

He puts *Cæsar* first; to show they talk vainly, who say that they serve God, when they leave out the King. First, thy father, "whom thou hast seen;" then God, "whom thou hast not seen," is the Apostle's rule for us to judge by; and his rule is God's. 1 S. John iv. 20.—*Dr. Mark Frank.*

V. 27.—When once infidelity can persuade men that they shall die, like beasts, they will soon be brought to live like beasts. 1 Cor. xv. 32, 33.—*Dr. South.*

V. 29.—The enemies of our Lord, by their cavils and objections, furthered unintentionally the cause of Divine Truth, when Christ took occasion to answer them for *their* confusion, but for *our* edification. By this means, we are instructed in the great doctrine of the Resurrection of the body, and of the nature of heavenly happiness; that it is spiritual and Angelic. The Sadducee preaches the law of death; but Christ the Gospel of the Resurrection. The Sadducee shows us a gloomy picture of the vanity of life, even at its most promising estate, when we "*marry and are given in marriage;*" for each succeeding husband

"*Died,*" and "*the woman Died also;*" but the Lord raises our thoughts and hopes to a better and surer inheritance, where "true joys are to be found." We may, however, suck honey from the rock of the hard-hearted Sadducee, by deriving from his sad story of domestic miseries the salutary Memento, that "in the midst of life we are in Death," and that there is no time for man upon earth, when he may say "Peace, peace." Thus the Sadducee becomes our teacher, while he enforces the wise caution of S. Paul (1 Cor. vii. 29–32), and the awful warning of the Lord Himself. S. Matt. xxiv. 38, 42.—*J. Ford.*

V. 29–33.—Death reigns, in all the portions of our time. The Autumn with its fruits provides diseases for us; and the Winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases; and the Spring brings flowers to strew our hearse; and the Summer green turf and brambles to bind our grave. 2 Sam. xiv. 14.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

Our death was bred, when our life was first conceived. We need no feller, to come with a hand of violence, and hew us down. There is in the tree a worm, which grows out of its own substance, that will destroy it; so in us those infirmities of nature, that will bring us down into the dust. Heb. ix. 27.—*Gurnall.*

O happy necessity of dying! What would the world be without thee?—*B. Overberg.*

V. 35.—Jesus Christ speaks of the highest things in such simple and familiar language, that they seem scarcely to occupy His thoughts; and yet with so much precision,

that they evidently seem to be the very habit of His mind. This distinctness, combined with this simplicity, is worthy of all admiration. S. John iii. 11.—*Pascal.*

V. 36.—What are Angels? Surely they are spirits, glorious spirits, heavenly spirits, immortal spirits: for their nature or substance, spirits; for their quality, or property, glorious; for their place or abode, heavenly; for their durance or continuance, immortal. Heb. i. 14; ix. 5; S. Matt. xxiv. 36.—*Bp. Andrewes.*

Children of the Resurrection. There are, in all, three several lives, belonging to every good Christian; and three births of course, thereto corresponding. Once he is born into the natural life, born of Adam: once he is born into the spiritual life, born "of Water and of the Spirit;" and once also into a life of Glory, born of the Resurrection at the last Day. Titus iii. 5; S. Matt. xix. 28.—*Dr. Waterland.*

V. 37.—He did not say "the God of Abraham's soul," but simply *of Abraham.* He blest Abraham, and He gave Him eternal life; not to his soul only, without his body, but to Abraham, as one man. He here seems to intimate, that the body never really dies; that we lose sight indeed of what we are accustomed to see, but that God still sees the elements of it, which are not exposed to our senses.—*J. H. Newman.*

V. 38.—The Holy Spirit resides invisibly in the remains of those, who are departed in the Grace of God, till He shall appear visibly in them at the Resurrection; and it is hence, that their earthly remains become worthy of

regard; for God will never leave, nor forsake those, that are truly His, not even in the grave, where their bodies, which are dead in the eyes of men, do now more properly live in the sight of God; being delivered from that sin, which ever dwelt in them in this life, as to the root, though not ever, as to the fruits and effects. Deut. xxxiv. 6.—*Pascal.*

V. 39.—*Thou hast well said.* S. Matthew observes, that by our Lord's answer, *the Sadducees were put to silence,* and that *the multitude, when they heard this, were astonished at His doctrine.* But, if those, who are against all reasoning from Scripture, who will admit of nothing, but what is directly therein contained, had been in the place of the Sadducees, they would not so easily have yielded to our Saviour's argument: they would have rejected this testimony from Moses, as not direct, and would have required a more formal and plain proof; they would have allowed of no inferences, which depended upon human reason, and would have replied to our Saviour that in the Text, alleged by Him, there was not one word concerning the resurrection of the dead. S. Matt. xv. 4; Ex. xx. 12; xxi. 17; Acts ii. 27; Rom. iv. 7.—*Bp. Smalridge.*

V. 42.—Wonder not to find one, and the same, to be the Prince and Priest, God and man, the Rod and the root, the Root and the offspring of David, his Son and yet his Lord; for these things belong to that One Person, who is both God and man; some of them, as He is God; some of them, as He is man; and some, as God-man. Zech. xiii. 7.—*S. Jerome.*

V. 44.—The Messiah, according to the Jewish notion, was to be in His nature, a mere man, and like other men; but in His condition in the world exalted to summits of honour and grandeur, above the Kings and Princes of this world. Our Saviour on the contrary describes Himself, and is described by His followers, as low and mean in His outward visible condition, but in His nature very different from the whole race of mankind. Hence, the Jews were at a loss to understand those expressions, by which He intended to intimate the distinction and superiority of His own nature. This was so little thought of, that they were unable to resolve the difficulty He proposed to them. *If Christ be David's son, how calleth he Him Lord?* S. John v. 18.—*Paley.*

The Scripture is not the mere letter, we read; but the right sense and interpretation, we put upon it. Acts viii. 30; 2 Cor. iii. 6.—*S. Hilary.*

V. 46.—Let your dress be sober, clean, and modest; not to set off the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind; that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For, it is highly reasonable that you should be one man, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such, as you are inwardly.—*Wm. Law.*

If it be unlawful to follow Christ for loaves (S. John vi. 26, 27), as it is; how much more is it abominable to make of Him and religion a stalking horse, to get and enjoy the world. Nor do we find any other, than heathens (Gen. xxxiv. 22, 23), hypocrites, devils (S. John vi. 70), and

witches (Acts viii. 20), that are of this opinion. Verse 20. —*Bunyan.*

V. 47.—God, who is Truth itself, stands in extreme opposition to all, that is feigned and counterfeit. An alms with a trumpet, a fast with a sour face, devotion, that *devours widows' houses,* do more provoke Him to wrath, than those vices, which these outward formalities seem to cry down. Nothing is more distasteful to Him, than a mixed compounded Christian, made up of a bended knee, and a stiff neck; of an attentive ear, and a hollow heart; of a pale countenance, and a rebellious spirit; of fasting, and oppression; of hearing, and deceit; of cringes, and bowings, and flatteries (ver. 20), and real disobedience. Absalom's vow, Jehu's sacrifices, Simon Magus's repentance, Ahab's fast—His soul doth hate; or any devil, that puts on Samuel's mantle: and He so far detests the mere outward performance of a religious duty, that, when He thunders from Heaven, when He breathes out His menaces and threatenings on the greatest sinners, the burden is, "They shall have their portion with *hypocrites.*" xvi. 13; Ps. xli. 5–9.—*Farindon.*

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 4.—Piteous indeed would be the condition of the *poor*, if their poverty shut them out from the noblest privilege, which God has bestowed upon mankind; the privilege of helping each other, the privilege of showing Christian charity in the various exercises of brotherly love. But it does not. The poorest of you may do as much (what in the eyes of God will be accounted as much), as the richest can do. You, of your poverty, may give your all; and they, at the utmost, can do no more. 1 Kings xvii. 12–14.—*A. W. Hare.*

Every state of life affords us opportunities of doing good, and which God will reward, provided we take care to act up to the opportunities God gives us. This should make us contented with every condition of life. 1 S. Pet. iv. 10.—*Bp. Wilson.*

God will not refuse the poor offerings of poor people; but He will not accept the poor offerings of the rich.—*Bp. Medley.*

V. 5.—The enemy endeavours to fix our eye on something present; he says, Look here! Look there! But he never says, Look up! . . If we see something to strike our little minds, we are ready to say with the disciples, when they beheld the Temple, *See what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!* But Christ turns away their eyes, and seems to say, "You are

looking upon dust." So He says to us, "I show you a House, not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens. Deut. xxxii. 11.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 7.—As there is a foolish wisdom, so there is a wise ignorance; in not prying into God's Ark, not inquiring into things not revealed. I would fain know all, that I need, and all, that I may: I leave God's secrets to Himself. It is happy for me, that God makes me of His court, though not of His council. xiii. 23; Acts i. 6.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 8.—We say, *Lo, here is Christ!* and, *Lo, there is Christ!* in these and these *opinions;* when as, in truth, Christ is neither here, nor there, nor anywhere; but where the Spirit of Christ, there the Life of Christ, is. . . Do we not make this and that opinion, this and that outward form, to be the Wedding garment, and boldly sentence those to outer darkness, that are not invested therewith? Whereas, every true Christian finds the least dram of hearty affection towards God, to be more cordial and sovereign to his soul, than all the speculative notions and opinions in the world. Rom. xiv. 1, 7, 8, 17, 18.—*R. Cudworth.*

Truths in many professors' minds are not, as stars, fixed in the Heavens, but like meteors, that dance in the air; they are not as characters, engraven in marble, but writ in the dust, which every wind and idle breath of seducers deface. Col. i. 23.—*Gurnall.*

V. 9.—*Be not terrified.* It is fancy, not the reason of things, that makes life so uneasy to us, as we find. It is

not the place, nor the condition, but the mind alone, that can make anybody happy, or miserable. Ps. xlvii. ; Acts xvi. 25.—*Palmer.*

Nothing would fortify us more against any manner of accidents, than our possessing our souls with this maxim —that we can never be hurt, but by ourselves. If our reason be what it ought, and our actions according to it, we are invulnerable. iv. 9 ; 1 S. Pet. iii. 13, 14.—*Charron.*

The end is not yet. Men are impatient, and are for precipitating things ; but the Author of Nature appears deliberate throughout His operations, accomplishing His natural ends by slow successive steps. And there is a plan of things, before laid out, which, from the nature of it, requires various systems of means, as well as length of time, in order to the carrying on its several parts into execution. Thus, in the daily course of natural providence, God operates in the very same manner, as He does in the dispensation of Christianity ; making one thing subservient to another ; this, to somewhat farther ; and so on, through a progressive series of means, which extend both backward and forward beyond our utmost view. Of this manner of operation, every thing we see in the course of nature, is as much an instance, as any part of the Christian dispensation. S. Mark iv. 28, 29.—*Bp. Butler.*

V. 13.—Every evil action is naturally attended with fear or shame. The malefactors, who love to commit evil, are desirous to conceal that inclination. They tremble, when taken ; they deny all, when accused ; and scarce can be racked into a confession. They lament their hard fate,

when condemned, and curse their ill stars for such an unfortunate end. But what does the Christian do? Is any of the Christians ashamed? Or, does he repent, when apprehended, except for not being apprehended sooner? If he be charged, as a Christian, he glories in the charge; if this be his accusation, he is not solicitous to shift it off; if he be asked the question, he readily owns the thing; if he be condemned, he thanks God for it. Acts xx. 23, 24; Heb. xi. 35.—*Tertullian.*

V. 15.—*A mouth and wisdom.* All you, whom God hath made Stewards over His household, and blessed your store (S. Matt. xiii. 52), manifest the spirit God hath given you, as may be most for the profit of your brethren. The Spirit of God, when He gave you wisdom and knowledge, intended not so much the wisdom and the knowledge themselves, as "the *manifestation* of them" (1 Cor. xii. 8), or "the *word* of wisdom, and the *word* of knowledge;" as Christ promised His Apostles to give them *a mouth and wisdom.* Alas! what is wisdom without a mouth? xix. 20; Ecclus. xx. 30; Exod. xvi. 20.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

The kind of inspiration, vouchsafed to the Apostles, appears somewhat different from that, imparted to the Prophets of the Old Testament. The age of the Prophets may be regarded, as years of minority; that of the Apostles, as the period of riper years. To the former was dictated every word, they were to speak, or write; the latter had greater scope in this respect; still, their writings are as much the Word of God, as are those of the Prophets. The very thoughts, with which God inspired the Apostles, furnished them at once with com-

petence and propriety of expression: else, how could they, as "unlearned and ignorant men," have had the command, which we see they had, of language so full, beautiful, and every way appropriate? Acts vi. 5, 8, 10. —*Bengel.*

The Christian soldier is bound up to God's order. Though the army be on earth, yet the council of war sits in Heaven. 2 Cor. x. 4.—*Gurnall.*

V. 18.—*Not an hair, &c.* If thy superfluous parts are in such good keeping, how great must be the security of thy bodily life. xii. 7.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 19.—Whatever falls out, that may be apt to ruffle and discompose you, do but pause awhile, and give yourselves time to recollect your thoughts, and consider whence it comes, whither it tends, and how much good may be designed you in it; and you will soon see what infinite cause you have to submit patiently to it. If the disciples (S. Luke xxi. 19) were *impatient* under any thing, that happened, they could not keep their souls in a right temper and disposition for the service He expected from them.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

Our weapons are faith, hope, charity, righteousness, truth, *patience*, prayer unto God; and our sword, wherewith we smite our enemies, we beat, and batter, and bear down all falsehood, is the Word of God. With these weapons, under the banner of the Cross of Christ, we do fight, ever having our eye upon our Grand Master, Duke, and Captain, Christ. And then we reckon ourselves to triumph, and to win the crown of everlasting bliss,

when, enduring in this battle, without any shrinking or yielding to the enemies, after the example of our great Captain, Christ, our Master, after the example of His holy Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs,—when, I say, we are slain in our mortal bodies by our enemies, and are cruelly and without all mercy murdered. Rom. viii. 36, 37; Eph. vi. 17.—*Bp. Ridley.*

He is happy, not who enjoys ease, but who can bear uneasiness.—*Bonnell.*

V. 21.—Beware of courting persecution; lest the cross, which you bring on yourself, you should be obliged to bear yourself.—*H. Martyn.*

V. 24.—The present condition of the Jews is a striking evidence of our religion. It is a marvellous thing to behold this nation, subsisting for so many years, and always in a state of wretchedness: but this is necessary, as an evidence of Christ; both that they should remain, as His witnesses, and that they should suffer, because of their ingratitude, their cruelty, and their obstinacy. Numb. xxiii. 9.—*Pascal.*

V. 25.—It may seem to fall out in this great body of the world, as it doth in this lesser body of our's: by its own distemper it is the cause of its own ruin. For the things, here mentioned by our Saviour, are nothing else, but the *diseases* of the old decaying. The failing of light in the sun and in the moon—what is it but the blindness of the world (S. Luke xviii. 8), an imperfection very incident to age? Tumours in the sea and waters—what are they, but the distempers of superfluous humours, which

abound in age? Wars and rumours of wars are but the falling out of the prime qualities, in the union and harmony of which the very being of the creature did consist.—*Farindon.*

V. 26.—The very expectation of Christ's Judgment is fearful. (Heb. x. 27); What will itself be? . . Let Job call death "the King of terrors;" that is, in the world's conceit. Judgment is more terrible; men shall not tremble only, but *their hearts shall fail them*, lose breath and ghost, to see the Judge frown, the earth burn, hell smoke, and the devils rage. Judges' seats are to malefactors fearful all; Christ's more than all. The Law was given with "burning fire, darkness, and tempest;" Moses adds more—smoke, thunder, lightning, a trumpet's sound exceeding loud, so that Moses himself shook and trembled for fear: this Day exceeds that far. The Judge will be more terrible to the transgressors of the Law, than He was then to the receivers of the Law. Joel ii. 6; Heb. xii. 21.—*Dr. R. Clerke.*

V. 27.—The Office of our Blessed Saviour's Mediatorship consists chiefly in three parts—His satisfaction, intercession, and judging the world at the last Day. The first of them He performed here on earth; the second He is still performing in Heaven; and the third He will perform in the air, *When He shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* . . And indeed the air is the most proper place for our Saviour to keep His great Assizes: for here, being advanced some distance above the earth, He will be more easily seen by all the inhabitants of it. Nay, farther yet; this is now the seat

of the devil's empire. Satan we know is called "The Prince of the air;" and the infernal fiends are styled "Spiritual wickednesses in high places." Here, therefore, will the Son of Man fix His judgment seat: here He will place His Throne, that all the world may know, that He has now "Spoiled principalities and powers," and got a complete and perfect victory over these His malicious enemies. Dan. vii. 13; Acts i. 9; Rev. i. 7.—*March.*

V. 28.—From those words of Scripture, "They shall look on Him, whom they have pierced," it hath been freely entertained, that, at the Day of Judgment, Christ shall signify His Person by something, that related to His Passion, His cross, His wounds, or both. I list not to spin this curious cobweb; but Origen's opinion seems to me more reasonable; and it is more agreeable to the Majesty and Power of Christ to signify Himself with proportions of His Glory, rather than of His humility, with effects of His being exalted into Heaven, rather than of his poverty and sorrows upon earth. . . He disparages the beauty of the sun, who inquires for a rule to know, when the sun shines, or the light breaks forth from the chambers of the East; and the Son of Man shall need no other signification, but His infinite retinue, and all the Angels of God worshipping Him, and sitting upon a cloud, and leading the Heavenly Host, and bringing His elect with Him, and being clothed with the robes of Majesty, and trampling upon devils, and confounding the wicked, and destroying death; but all these great things shall be invested with such strange circumstances, and annexes of mightiness and Divinity, that all the world

shall confess the Glories of the Lord. Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7–11.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

Lift up your heads. This conveys an intimation of the Resurrection of *the body*. We wait for our "Adoption, that is, the redemption of our bodies." A like inference may be drawn from S. Matt. xxii. 13, "Bind him *hand* and *foot*," and from S. Luke xx. 35, "Neither marry, nor are given in marriage." 1 Cor. xv. 53.—*J. Ford.*

V. 29.—Orators use large proemiums to make their hearers attentive, and to win their minds to what they would persuade: but Christ ordinarily useth but one word, *Behold:* for, 1. The least word from Him is sufficient to influence the heart. 2. The less external rhetoric and pomp of words is used, the more it beseems the simplicity of the Gospel.—*Dr. Lake.*

V. 30.—As herbs peep out of the earth, when the summer comes near them, aud birds sing, when the spring is near, so *look up,* as if our Redemption, our spring, were near. For this thou wert made; for this thou wert sent into the world, to behold and look upon these things, to look up, and be undaunted, nay, to look up, and leap, and rejoice. For, thy whole life is but a preparation and eve to this great Holiday of sights. Rom. viii. 23; S. James v. 7, 8.—*Farindon.*

V. 31.—Dearest brethren, the Kingdom of God has begun to be *nigh* at hand; reward of Life, and joy of Eternal Salvation, and perpetual happiness, and possession of Paradise, lately lost, already while the world passes away, are coming nigh; already Heavenly things are

succeeding to earthly, and great to small, and Eternal to transient. What place is here for anxiety and solicitude? Who, amid these things, is tremulous and mournful, except in whom hope and faith are wanting? It is for him to be afraid of death, who hath not willingness to come to Christ; and for him to be unwilling to come to Christ, who does not believe, that he has begun to reign with Christ. For it is written, that "The just lives by faith." 2 S. Pet. iii. 12, 13.—*S. Cyprian.*

V. 33.—By drawing the terrors of His last coming so black, our Blessed Master hath taken the most probable course to awaken men's consciences, and to put them upon shaking off spiritual security and sloth; and from the representations, given of it, as a thing certain in itself, and uncertain in the time, He hath cut off all wicked excuses for unthinking negligence and dangerous delays. xii. 35–40.—*Dean Stanhope.*

V. 34.—What is our *heart*, but the most noble part of the human frame, which, like a King, has the entire charge of all the members of the body, subject to its rule? Our heart is the stronghold of the Omnipotent King, which He hath confided to our ever watchful keeping. —Prov. iv. 23.—*Theodoret.*

A full meal is like Sisera's banquet, at the end of which there is a nail, struck into a man's head; it knocks a man down, and nails his soul to the sensual mixtures of the body. . . The senses languish, the spark of Divinity, that dwells within us, is quenched. . . So have I seen the eye of the world, looking upon a

fenny bottom; and, drinking up too free draughts of moisture, gathered them into a cloud; and then covered them with darkness and an artificial night; so is our reason at a feast. But temperance is reason's girdle, and passion's bridle; the strength of the soul, the foundation of virtue, the ornament of all good things, and the corroborative of all excellent habits.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 35.—There is a twofold *snare* here: first, the snare of eating, drinking, and marrying, things, lawful and innocent in themselves, but fatal to the soul, when the means of causing us to forget God. This is the snare of never suspecting spiritual danger in what is the commonly allowed "course of this present world." Then, secondly, there is the snare, arising from the uncertainty of the time, when the Master, the Judge, will come and call for us; for He "cometh, as a thief in the night."—*J. Ford.*

Christ says, *Watch and pray.* Herein lies your cure. To watch and to pray are surely in your power; and by these means we are certain of getting strength. You feel your weakness; you fear to be overcome by temptation: then keep out of the way of it. This is *watching.* Avoid society, which is likely to mislead you; flee from the very shadow of evil: you cannot be too careful: better be a little too strict, than a little too easy; it is the safer side. Abstain from reading books, which are dangerous to you. Turn from bad thoughts, when they arise; set about some business, begin conversing with some friend, or say to yourself the Lord's Prayer with seriousness and reverence. When you are urged by temptation, whether

it be the threats of the world, false shame, self-interest, provoking conduct on the part of others, or the world's sinful pleasures—urged to be cowardly, or covetous, or angry, or sensual—think on Christ's precious Blood-shedding. Do not dare to say you cannot help sinning. A little attention to these points will go far, through God's grace, to keep you in the right way. And, again, *Pray*, as well as *watch*. S. Mark xiv. 38; 1 S. Pet. iv. 7.—*J. H. Newman.*

V. 36.—God hath purposely in His threats joined and tempered *Mercy* and *Truth* together; that we might take them together, and profit by them together. . . The consideration of His Truth humbleth us; without it, we would be fearless: the consideration of His Mercy supporteth us; without it, we would be hopeless. Truth begetteth fear and repentance; Mercy, faith and hope: and these two, faith and repentance, keep the soul even, and upright, and steady, as the ballast and sail do the ship; that, for all the rough waves and weather, that encountereth her in the troublesome sea of this world, she miscarrieth not, but arriveth safe and joyful in the haven, where she would be. . . His threatenings are true; let us not presume of forbearance; but fear, since He hath threatened, that, unless we repent, He will strike us. Yet His threatenings are but conditional: let us not despair of forbearance; but hope, although He hath threatened, that yet, if we repent, He will spare us. xiii. 9; Rom. xi. 22.—*Bp. Sanderson.*

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 1.—S. Luke's Gospel seems to contain the fullest account of the particulars of our Blessed Saviour's last sufferings. This accords with the Evangelist's symbol of the Sacrificial calf, and with the acknowledged peculiar tendency of his Gospel to set forth God's mercy to penitent sinners, and to comfort their hearts.—*J. Ford.*

V. 2.—Behold, O my soul! how busy the Jews are to remove all *leaven* out of their houses, against the Passover. How loth hast thou been these many years to remove the leaven of vanity out of thy heart, when thou hast gone to meet thy Blessed Redeemer! . . *They feared the people.* And hath not this been thy case, O my soul? Hast thou not feared men, more than God? Hast thou not been more afraid of dust and ashes, than of the Holy One of Israel? How often couldest thou have dispensed with God's seeing thy folly, if it could have been concealed from the knowledge of men! And, when thou hast avoided and shunned a sin, hath it not been more for fear of blemishing thy credit and reputation in the world, than of love to the Law of God? Hath not temporal interest restrained thee from sin, more than God's all-seeing eye? 1 Cor. v. 7; Prov. xxix. 25; Isa. li. 12, 13. —*Dr. Horneck.*

V. 4.—Let infidelity behold, and be amazed (for it cannot be convinced) when it finds the Jewish rulers

chaffering and cheapening with Judas about the Blood of his Master, and, at length, contrary to the treacherous intention of his heart, and the malicious designs of theirs, unwittingly agreeing on the single scheme, that would fulfil the prophecies, and prove, beyond question, that Christ was actually the Messiah; that the wonders He wrought were true and genuine miracles; and that the religion He preached was the very Will and Word of God. Isa. x. 6, 7; Micah iv. 12.—*P. Skelton.*

V. 6.—Thou hast with Judas sold thy meek, loving, and gentle Master: repent thee, and no doubt thou shalt find mercy. To fall is a thing, annexed to the corrupt nature of man; but to lie still in the filthy puddle of perdition is to despise God, the Author and first Maker of nature. To fall into the darkness of error is a point of man's ignorance; but to walk on still in darkness, is to love darkness more than light. To wink at the brightness of the sun is a weakness of the eye; but to fly the light is to be of the night. 2 Cor. xii. 21; Eph. v. 14.—*Laurence Saunders,* M.

V. 9.—But how is the Minister to *prepare* the people for Passion Week? By speaking to them of sin. For it was sin, that caused Christ's death. He is the Lamb of God, who died for the sins of the whole world; that by His precious Blood-shedding He might reconcile and re-unite us to the Father, and might obtain the Holy Ghost for us, to regenerate us, and, as it were, spiritually re-create us; so that we might become new men, and be turned from the power of Satan to God. This was the

main reason, why Christ died, that He might procure us the pardon of our past sins, and grace to help us for the future. Now is it not plain, that, in order to understand the value of this mercy, we must begin with being convinced of the hatefulness and danger of sin? v. 30–32; Rom. iii. 23–27.—*A. W. Hare.*

V. 10.—With peculiar beauty does *a man bearing a pitcher of water* meet the disciples, on their going to *prepare the Passover;* that hence the design of this Passover might be illustrated, in its effect of entirely washing away the sins of the whole world. For the water is the laver of Grace; and the pitcher denotes the frailty of those human instruments, by whom this Grace was to be administered to the world. 1 Cor. iv. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 7.—*Bede.*

We are too apt to forget our mutual dependence upon Providence for the circumstances of every instant. Turning up one street, instead of another, may bring us into company with a person, whom we should not otherwise have met; and this may lead to a train of other events, which may determine the happiness or misery of our lives. Jer. x. 23; Ps. cxliii. 8.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 13.—*Found as He had said.* What a variety of minute circumstances; the *entrance* of the city—a *man* —*meeting* you—*bearing*—a *pitcher*—of *water*—*entering a house.* Had any of these seven minute circumstantial particulars been found wanting, the direction would have failed them, and the prophecy have proved untrue. But is not this the Infinite eye, which is in every place? Is

not this He, that said unto Nathanael, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee?" Is not this "the Son of God, the King of Israel?" S. John i. 48, 49; Gen. xxiv. 12–28.—*J. Ford.*

V. 14.—For the manner of receiving the Lord's Supper, as the Parson useth all reverence himself, so he administers to none, but to the reverent. The feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a feast; but man's unpreparedness asks kneeling. He that comes to the Sacrament, hath the confidence of a guest; and he, that kneels, confesseth himself an unworthy one; and therefore differs from other feasters: but he, that sits, or lies, puts up to an Apostle. Contentiousness, in a feast of charity, is more scandal, than any posture. xiv. 10, 11.—*G. Herbert.*

V. 15.—Behold what a hearty vehemence there was in His love! What an ardour in His *desire* to be made an offering for us, and to be remembered by us! With what love should we commemorate His dying love; with what desire should our souls approach to His Holy Table! . . Awake, awake then, my faith; call up thy love; quicken thy desires; excite all, that is within thee, to bless the Lord, and "speak good of His Name." Say, with a great joy, Lo! I come according to Thy command, and delight "to do Thy will, O God." With desire I have desired to *do this in remembrance* of my Lord, to declare Thy mighty acts, and to show forth the greatness of Thy love; to profess myself Thy servant, and to glory in the Holy Name of my Master, Jesus; to offer up myself unto Thee, an oblation of love; to renew my covenant with Thee, and with all my brethren; to give

Thee thanks that I am one of Thy family, and for all the benefits I have received, and Thou hast still in store for Thy faithful servants.—*Bp. Patrick.*

His perfect *willingness* to suffer and to die is to be regarded, in a doctrinal sense, as a necessary qualification, according to the terms of the Levitical Law, whereby He was rendered a proper and acceptable offering and sacrifice for sin. His death was by His own voluntary act and deed. Lev. i. 3; S. John x. 18; xiii. 27; xiv. 31.—*J. Ford.*

We may regard Him, as keeping *the Passover*, as He was the Son of man, "born under the Law" (Gal. iv. 4; v. 3); and then He institutes His own Divine Feast, as He was the Son of God, a feast of solid substantial food and heavenly dainties; in partaking of which, by faith, we obtain a joyful resurrection, and a blessed immortality, the Holy Ghost by this means incorporating us into Christ, and sealing us unto the day of Redemption.—*J. Ford.*

V. 19.—Some things that Christ spake to His Apostles, He spake to them, as representing the whole company of Christians; as His *Vigilate*, "Watch" (S. Mark xii. 41; xiii. 37). Some things to them, not as Christians, but as preachers, or priests; as His, "Go, preach the Gospel," and His, *Do this in remembrance of Me;* which no man thinketh all Christians may do. And some things to them, personally; as that He had appointed them witnesses of His miracles and Resurrection, which cannot be applied but to them, and them in person. Compare verses 26, 29, 30.—*Bp. Andrewes.*

Jesus is "a Minister" of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle; that is, He, as our High Priest, officiates in Heaven, in the great office of a Mediator; in the merit and power of His death and resurrection. Now, what Christ does always in a proper and most glorious manner, the Ministers of the Gospel also do in their's; Commemorating the Sacrifice upon the Cross, "giving thanks," and celebrating a perpetual Eucharist for it, and by declaring the death of Christ, and praying to God, in the virtue of it, for all the members of the Church and all persons capable; it is, in the way of prayer, a Sacrifice, and an instrument of propitiation, as all holy prayers are in their several proportions. And this was by a precept of Christ; "*Do this* in remembrance of Me." Now, this precept is but twice reported of in the New Testament, though the institution of the Sacrament be four times. And it is done with admirable mystery, to distinguish the several interests and operations, which concern several sorts of Christians, in their distinct capacities. S. Paul thus represents it, *Take, eat. . . This do in remembrance of Me,* plainly referring this precept to *all,* that are to eat and drink the symbols; for they also do in their manner enunciate, declare, or represent "The Lord's death, till He come." And S. Paul prosecutes it with instructions, particularly to them, that do communicate, as appears in the succeeding cautions against unworthy manducation, and for due preparation to its reception. But S. Luke reports it plainly to another purpose. *And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying: This is My Body, which is given for you—This Do in remembrance*

of Me. This cannot but relate to the acts of His taking bread, giving thanks, breaking it, and giving it to them—*Do this.* Here was no manducation (eating) expressed; and, therefore, *Do this* concerns the Apostles in the capacity of Ministers; not as receivers, but as Consecrators and givers. . . And, this being the great mystery of Christianity, and the only remnant of Christ's Sacrifice on earth, it is most consonant to the analogy of the mystery, that this Commemorative Sacrifice be presented by persons, as separate and distinct in their Ministry, as the Sacrifice is from, and above, the other parts of our religion. Heb. vii, 23, &c.; viii. 2, 3, &c.—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

V. 20.—*Likewise also.* This redundancy of expression, when either word apparently might have sufficed, has probably some peculiar meaning and importance, which that Church may best explain to us, that has presumed to deny the Cup to her laity. "Drink ye *all* of it," has been viewed in the same light, as being almost a prophetic protest against the same daring innovation.—*J. Ford.*

God would not dispense with the first Covenant, without a ransom that might remove all hindrances by securing the honour of His Holiness, and utterly discouraging all future offences, and satisfying all the ends of justice. And, because that could not otherwise so well be effected, as He thought fit it should, Christ Himself became an expiatory sacrifice, and, by dying for it obtained the second Covenant; and for this cause it is called, *The new Covenant in His Blood* (Heb. ix. 15; 1 Cor. xi. 25). . . And, as we first entered into this Covenant, when we were Baptized, so we are called to

renew and confirm the same, every time we are invited to sup with our Blessed Lord in this Holy Sacrament. When He summons us to "Eat bread and to drink wine," in "Remembrance of His death, at this Feast, He calls us withal to confirm the new Covenant, which His death has purchased. He invites us to receive engagements from God of His promised mercies, and to give Him engagements of our duty and service, that so we may have right thereto. He intends our eating and drinking at His Table, as a Federal rite, and for a renewal and ratification of this league of love and friendship. . . For *Sacrifice* is one way of Covenant with God; and by *Feasting on the Sacrifice*, we join therein and partake of it. . . He, who joined in the feast, was looked upon by God Himself to join also in the offering, to promise all the duty, which it engaged, and to partake of all the blessings, which it procured for them. Gen. xxxi. 44–46; Josh. ix. 14; Ex. xxxii. 5, 6; xxxiv. 15; 1 Sam. ix. 13; 1 Cor. x. 18; Heb. xiii. 10; 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.—*Kettlewell.*

Oh, say, concerning thy corruptions, It was this and that base lust of mine, which killed my Saviour; it was this and that sin, which squeezed so much gall and wormwood into the bitter cup of His suffering. I see them stained with His Blood; they look guilty of His Death; and shall I lodge in my heart the bloody murderers of my Saviour? No; their blood shall certainly "go for His." Gen. xxxix. 9; Heb. vi. 6.—*Bp. Hopkins.*

V. 22.—Some perhaps may be bold to ask, whether God's making use of the sins of men does not look like concurring with, and countenancing, their iniquities? No,

by no means. For herein chiefly is seen the marvellous perfection of Divine wisdom, to make such use of sinners, undefiled with their sins; to serve Himself of their impurities, remaining all the while infinitely pure. It is not, that He needs men's sins, or makes them; for He could bring about His all-wise purposes without such instruments: but, as men, by abusing their liberty of choice (proper to free agents) will of course commit sins, which in their own nature and tendency are most pernicious, threatening nothing but destruction and misery to the world; in this case, God Himself undertakes so to controul, curb, and regulate this mischievous quality, that it shall not disturb the peace and harmony of the world, farther than is useful for the ends of discipline; but shall be so directed and governed, as to prove in the event serviceable and beneficial to the world; and shall at length be hurtful to none, but to the authors and contrivers of it, who must suffer for it. Such is the admirable and most adorable conduct of Divine Providence in bringing good out of evil, and turning the rankest poisons into wholesome and salutary medicines. Gen. l. 20; Rom. xi. 33–36.—*Dr. Waterland.*

V. 23.—*Exceeding sorrowful* (S. Matt. xxvi. 22).—Oh! how Christians hang down their heads upon the scandal of any of their company; as all the Patriarchs were troubled, when the cup was found in one of their sacks. 1 Cor. v. 2.—*Gurnall.*

V. 24.—Surely there would have been no room for this strife, if they had understood the Lord to have invested any one of their number, as S. Peter, with a supreme

authority and distinct jurisdiction above the rest. 1 Cor. i. 12.—*J. Ford.*

V. 25.—Was it the meaning of the ancient prophets of God, that the Messias, the King of Israel, should be like unto these kings, and His retinue grow in such sort, as theirs? "Wherefore ye are not to look for, at My hands, such preferment, as kings of nations are wont to bestow upon their attendants. *With you not so.* Your reward in Heaven shall be most ample. On earth your chiefest honour must be to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake: submission, humility, and meekness are things fitter for you, to inure your minds withal, than their aspiring cogitations. If any amongst you be greater than other, let him show himself greatest in being lowliest; let him be above them in being under them, even as a servant, for their good. These are affections, which you must put on. As for degrees of preferment and honour in this world, if ye expect any such thing at My hands, ye deceive yourselves; for in the world your portion is rather the clear contrary." xvii. 20, 21; S. John xiii. 36.—*Hooker.*

V. 26.—The more bounty God shows, the more humility He requires. Those mines, that are richest, are deepest; those stars, that are highest, seem smallest; the goodliest buildings have the lowest foundations. The more God honoureth men, the more they should humble themselves; the more the fruit, the lower the branch, on which it grows. Pride is ever the companion of emptiness. 1 Cor. xv. 9; 2 Cor. xii. 1–7; Eph. iii. 8.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

V. 28.—Persecutions in this, and many other places of the Gospel are called emphatically *temptations;* because that of all the trials, which men can undergo for the sake of God and religion, those terrible pains and sufferings, wherein *persecutions* consist, are by far most difficult to be withstood by feeble flesh and blood.—*Dr. Hickes.*

V. 29.—Whatsoever is meant by the reward, intimated by this expression, for the quality thereof it is plain there is some peculiar, and more eminent, degree of Glory, here promised to the Apostles, which shall not be common to others with them : first, because it is the reward of their proper and peculiar service to Christ, as the Text shows : secondly, because these twelve Thrones, in regard of their number, can befit no more but these twelve; thirdly, supposing the twelve tribes of Israel here mentioned to be likewise in a condition of bliss and happiness, it must needs be that those, who *Sit upon twelve thrones to judge,* that is, to govern them, must be in a higher degree of dignity than those, over whom they are set. Whatsoever, therefore, the meaning of the reward be, thus much may be gathered from the description thereof; that there shall be differing degrees of Glory in the Kingdom of Christ to come. xix. 19; S. Matt. x. 41 ; 1 Cor. iii. 8.—*J. Mede.*

V. 30.—*With Me in My temptations,—at My table in My kingdom.* These two states, the Cross and the Crown, are inseparably joined together. This is the *Via Regia,* The Royal Road. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." But are our whole lives regulated, and, more especially, our afflictions borne, on

this principle? Seek we not some other easier way of entering His kingdom?—*J. Ford.*

V. 31.—Though we have *continued with Christ in His temptations*, and perhaps endured, for His sake, "a great fight of afflictions," yet we must stand prepared for further *sifting*, and expect no sure and perfect rest, while in this tabernacle of flesh and blood, this world of evil men, evil spirits, and above all, our own evil hearts (See Gen. xxii. 1). "*After these things*, God did tempt Abraham." Deut. xii. 9.—*J. Ford.*

V. 32.—Christ now not only poured out these prayers for Peter, but also for the whole company of the Apostles, except Judas, who then cast in his mind his betraying of Christ. This is manifest: first, because Christ saith, "Satan hath desired *you*," not thee; for he laid not snares for Peter alone, but for the rest of the Apostles, although especially for him, because he made show of greater constancy than the rest: secondly, this is manifest from the words of Christ (S. John xvii. 9, 20), where He openly witnesseth, that He prayed for His other Apostles and disciples.—*Edw. Leigh.*

No grace is safe, if from under the wing of *faith*. This was the reserve, that Christ took care should be kept to recover Peter's other graces, when foiled by the enemy, and to bring him off that encounter, wherein he was so sadly bruised and broken. Eph. vi. 16; 1 S. Pet. v. 9.—*Gurnall.*

We may look upon Sampson, as a common emblem of the dispensations of Grace, and all men are fortified in

their soul, after the same manner, that he was in his body. For example, his strength lay not in his sinews, but was extrinsecal, in his locks, though thence communicated to his sinews; and so our moral strength lies not in our soul. Our soul has no stock of strength intrinsic to itself, by which it can sustain itself. Let the supplies of Grace be once cut off, as it happened to Sampson's locks, and that moment the best become "weak, as other men." 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; S. John xv. 1–5.—*Dean Young.*

V. 33, 34.—God knows our hearts better than we do ourselves; and therefore we ought to believe what God has revealed and declared, though it be never so contrary to our imaginations. . . One does not begin to fall, when the fall becomes sensible. 2 Kings viii. 13; Rom. vii. 18; Hos. vii. 9.—*Bp. Wilson.*

The heart is never more deceitful, than in the report which it gives of our progress in Christian virtues. S. Matt. xx. 22, 23.—*H. Martyn.*

V. 36.—Even as they, which teach to swim, do at first hold up their scholars with their hand, but afterwards, taking away the hand, they bid them look to themselves, so Christ dealt with His disciples; He held them up hitherto, so that they had no want; but now He biddeth them do something to help themselves. S. John xvii. 12. —*S. Chrysostom.*

V. 39.—*The Mount of Olives,* in the days of the Kings of Judah, was defiled with idolatry, and therefore called the Mount of corruption. Christ goes up to that Mount,

to purge it by His tears and prayers. O my soul! what hath thy heart been, but the seat of corruption? Yet how backward hast thou been to purge it of its uncleanness! How little hast thou considered the Saviour's promise, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Jer. iv. 14.—*Dr. Horneck.*

V. 41.—Our Saviour, when He means to pray most earnestly, retires from all company; yet how irksome hath retirement been to thee, O my soul. . . Thou hast been afraid to meet thy God in private, and by that means deprived thyself of the gracious influences, which He imparts to them, that love His company. Behold, thy Redeemer bows His knees, and *kneels* on the cold ground (S. John xviii. 18) to offer up His supplications to His Father. How strangely hast thou consulted thine ease in prayer! How afraid hast thou been to kneel, if thou hast had no cushion! How loth to put thy flesh to any trouble in God's service! Did the Son of God prostrate Himself upon the grass, or earth, He stood upon, and art thou afraid of hurting thyself in prayer, if thou hast not the accommodations of softness and luxury? 2 Tim. ii. 3. —*Dr. Horneck.*

V. 42.—He stood under the imputation of all our sins; and, though He were personally innocent, yet judicially, and by way of interpretation, He was the greatest offender, that ever was. . . As our Lord was pleased to be our Representative in bearing our sins, and to stand in our stead, so all these affections and motions of His soul did bear the same conformity, as if acted by us. As He put on the person of the sinner, so He put on the same

sorrow, the same shame, the same fear, the same trembling, under the apprehension of the wrath of His Father, that we must have done: and so, as an imputed sin drew with it the obligation unto punishment, so it did, by necessary consequence, raise all those storms and confusions in the soul of Christ, as it would have done in the person of the sinner, sin only excepted. 2 Cor. v. 21; Isa. liii. 6.—*Sir M. Hale.*

That it was not the fear of dying on the Cross, which made Him speak and pray in the manner here related, is evident from this; that to suppose it, would be to degrade our Lord's character infinitely. Make His sufferings as terrible as possible; clothe them with all the aggravating circumstances imaginable; yet, if no more is included in them, but the pains of death, for Jesus, whose human nature was strengthened far beyond the natural pitch by its union with the Divine, to have shrunk at the prospect of them, would show a weakness, which many of His followers were strangers to, encountering more terrible deaths without the least emotion. . . The truth is, His words on the Cross cannot be accounted for, but on the supposition that He suffered in His mind pains inexpressible, inflicted on Him by an immediate interposition of the power of God, the nature and intenseness of which cannot, in the language of men, be more justly, or emphatically expressed, than by the metaphor of God's "forsaking Him." xii. 50; Heb. v. 7.—*Dr. Macknight.*

V. 43.—How must this Angel have been amazed at the abasement of his Creator! With what humility must he have adored the holiness and purity of God in this stupendous transaction!—*Rambach.*

V. 44.—It is ridiculous to expect God will hear us, when we really do not hear ourselves; which is the case, when our lips move, as it were, mechanically, but our minds are absent and inattentive. It was with this view, that in the ancient Greek Liturgies, the Deacon was ordered to cry aloud, "Let us pray fervently;" and again, some time after, "Let us pray more fervently still." And, it would be well, if we would make this use of that exhortatory admonition, which occurs so often in our Liturgy, "*Let us pray.*" . . We should serve God with that undivided attention, which is due from a creature to his Creator. xiii. 24; Col. iv. 12.—*J. Seed.*

Alas, shall such precious drops *fall to the ground!* Oh, let us open our hearts, that they may be moistened with this Sacred this Heavenly dew!—*Rambach.*

He knew that the Father demanded Blood (Heb. ix. 22). He does not wait, till the scourges, the thorns, and the nails should forcibly cause it to flow; but He willingly pours it forth. . . He knew that the human race needed Blood, for the price of its redemption and for its cure. He anticipates both. Oh, love of His, most prompt, and ready! Our alacrity in His service should answer to it. xii. 50.—*De Boussu.*

V. 45.—Satan always rocks the cradle, when we *sleep* at our devotions. . . If we would prevail with God, we must wrestle; and, if we would wrestle happily with God, we must wrestle first with our own dulness.—*Bp. Hall.*

The more dejection is given way to, the weaker the

soul is. The soul much dejected is unfit for any service. It was this, that unfitted the disciples to watch; it is said, Christ *found them sleeping for sorrow.* Sorrow brings one a sleep both natural and spiritual; dejection causeth drowsiness. . . . Sad souls are not fit for soldiers; "The cheerful soul is a giant, refreshed with wine;" it can fight the Lord's battles with courage. The sad soul is liable unto cowardice. As "The joy of the Lord is our strength," so the sorrow of our spirits is our weakness. 1 Cor. xvi. 13.—*Durant.*

V. 46.—O happy servant, whom God takes such earnest care to amend, at whom He expresses so high displeasure.—*Tertullian.*

V. 48.—Every word in the text tends to cover it with a several blackness. "*Betrayest* thou?" blackens it with malice. "*Judas,* betrayest *thou?*" blackens it with perfidiousness. "Judas, betrayest thou *the Son of man?*" blackens it with ingratitude. "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man *with a kiss?*" blackens it with hypocrisy.—*Dean Young.*

It must, I think, be allowed that Judas could not have expected that Christ's death would follow on his betrayal. His speedy remorse, when he saw the turn events were taking, seems to prove this; and even his hypocritical kiss agrees with it, by which he seems anxious to keep on good terms with his Master; as if he said, while he kissed Him, "Mark, I have nothing to do with the crowd, which is coming to assault Thee." Thus he probably thought, that he might at once by his treachery hurry on the crisis,

and prove, whether, or no, his Master had the Divine power, which had so long been attributed to Him, and yet retain His good will; that if, as he probably expected, Christ proved victorious, he might still hope to share in His triumph (Verse 30); and, at the same time, in his bargain with the priests, he takes the opportunity of indulging his low propensity for gain. A sad picture this, truly, of a miserably lost nature, striving by base deceit to gratify inordinate selfishness, without giving up all hopes of reigning in Christ's Kingdom. Ps. xli. 6; Job viii. 13–15. —*Abp. Tait.*

He, that professes himself thy open enemy, arms thee against the evil, he means thee; but he, that dissembles himself thy secret friend, strikes beyond caution, and wounds above cure. From the first thou mayest deliver thyself: from the last, good Lord, deliver thee! 2 Sam. iii. 27; Ps. xxviii. 3; lv. 12.—*F. Quarles.*

Sins of wilfulness, called deadly sins, prevent a sinner's Salvation; sins of infirmity, called venial sins, prevent a saint's Perfection. Ps. xix. 12, 13; 1 S. John i. 6, 8.—*J. Ford.*

V. 51.—Malice is blind, and wickedness cannot see before it, and does not know that it is sharpening its hands against itself. Thus the malice, which Satan kindled in the Jews, exemplified our Lord's perfect charity; their inveterate cruelty, the perfection of His patience; their accumulated threats, His fortitude.—Ps. lxxvi. 10.—*Is. Williams.*

A more glorious victory cannot be obtained over

another man, than this; that, when the injury began on his part, the kindness shall begin on ours. S. Matt. v. 43–48.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

V. 53.—*Your* hour. When we think our time is *our own*, we are like to scruple nothing in our way of spending it.—*J. Ford.*

Power of darkness. When men imagine themselves to be acting freely, according to their own corrupt inclinations, they are generally the greatest slaves of Satan. S. John viii. 34; 2 Tim. iii. 2.—*Rambach.*

V. 54.—As no place is left free by the devil's malice, so no place must be made prejudicial by our carelessness; and, as we should always watch over ourselves, so then most, when the opportunity carries cause of suspicion. Prov. iv. 25–27; xix. 16.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 55.—Sins make all equal, whom they find together; and then they are worst, who ought to be best.—*G. Herbert.*

No man's condition so sure as our's. The Prayer of Christ (Verse 32), is more than sufficient both to strengthen us, be we never so weak, and to overthrow all adversary power, be it never so strong and potent. His prayer must not exclude our labours. Their thoughts are vain, who think that their watching can preserve the city, which God Himself is not willing to keep; and are not theirs as vain, who think that God will keep the city, for which they themselves are not careful to watch? The husbandman may not therefore burn his plough, nor the

merchant forsake his trade, because God hath promised, "I will not forsake thee." And do the promises of God, concerning our stability, think you, make it a matter indifferent for us to use, or not to use, the means, whereby to attend, or not to attend to, reading? to pray, or not to pray, that we "fall not into temptations?" Surely, if we look to stand in the faith of the Sons of God, we must hourly continually be providing and setting ourselves to strive. It was not the meaning of our Lord in saying "Father, keep them in Thy name," that we should be careless to keep ourselves. To our own safety our own sedulity is required: and then, Blessed for ever and ever be that mother's child, whose faith hath made him a child of God! Rom. xi. 20–22; 1 Cor. x. 12.—*Hooker.*

V. 58.—How shall we have power to accomplish our good resolutions, when it is not even in our power to remind ourselves of them at the proper time?—*B. Overberg.*

Our words declare our hearts; as a man may be discovered of what country he is, when he speaks, so of what spirit he is of. S. Mark xv. 70.—*Caryl.*

V. 61.—*The Lord turned, &c.* How soon had He sorrowful occasion to remember His own Divine Prayer—*But these are in the world!* How readily did He turn to restore the fallen, whom He had for a time left to their own weakness, that they might learn from the experience of the past evermore to trust in Him; for this return and look of the Saviour may well be extended, in its application, to all the disciples. S. John xvii. 11.—*J. Ford.*

They, whom Jesus *looks* on, mourn their misdeeds. S. Peter at first denied, yet wept not; for the Lord had not looked on him. S. Peter a second time denied, yet wept not; for the Lord hitherto had not looked on him. He denied a third time, and Jesus looked on him; and then he wept most bitterly. S. John xv. 5; Ps. cxlvii. 18.—*S. Ambrose.*

The conciseness and sublimity, with which this is mentioned, resemble the account in Genesis of His Word being spoken, at which the world was created. The Lord *looked,* and S. Peter *wept bitterly;* the Lord *looked,* and the darkness of death was fled, and light filled the mind. Ps. cxix. 91.—*Is. Williams.*

V. 62.—*Went out.* In solitude, the pleasures and glories of the world no longer strike upon the senses, and solicit the affections. The soul therefore in this situation, like one escaped out of a battle to a place of security, hath leisure to reflect upon her condition, and to provide for her future safety. . . In retirement we find ourselves best able to practise all the holy acts of abstinence and self denial, so needful for the perfecting repentance by mortifying the whole body of sin. Gen. xliii. 30.—*Bp. Horne.*

Let those, who have not yet fallen, hear this, lest they fall; and let those, who are down, hear, that they may arise. We have not in this, the case of S. Peter, an example of falling, but rather of rising up again from a fall. Ps. li. 13.—*S. Augustine.*

How chance, that S. Peter was received into favour

again with God, and Judas cast away, but because that the one did, by a lively faith in Him, whom He had denied, take hold upon the mercy of God; and the other wanted faith, whereby he did despair of the goodness and mercy of God. It is evident and plain then, that, although we be never so earnestly sorry for our sins, acknowledge and confess them, yet all these things shall be but means to bring us to utter desperation, except we do Believe steadfastly, that God, our Heavenly Father, will, for His Son Jesus Christ's sake, pardon and forgive us our offences and trespasses, and utterly put them out of remembrance and His sight. S. Mark i. 15.—*Homilies.*

V. 63.—Beware of him, who jests at everything. Such men disparage by some ludicrous association all objects, which are presented to their thoughts, and thereby render themselves incapable of any emotion, which can either elevate or soften them; they bring upon their moral being an influence, more withering than the blasts of the desert. Acts ii. 13.—*Dr. Southey.*

First they *took* the Lord, then they *mocked*, then they *struck*, &c. Evil men wax worse and worse. Sin is of the same tendency in all cases. S. Peter first simply denied; then, cursed and sware. iii. 20.—*J. Ford.*

V. 64.—Behold affronts and indignities, which the world thinks it right never to pardon, which the Son of God endures with a Divine meekness! Let us cast at the feet of Jesus Christ, thus unworthily treated by His creatures, that false honour, that quick sense of affronts, that mischievous refinement, which is punctilious about a trifle,

which exaggerates everything, and pardons nothing, and, above all that devilish determination in resenting injuries. The more He is abased for us, the more we ought to adore Him. That, which He suffers *in His face,* condemns those, who idolize their own, and that criminal care, which they take in order to please others by their looks. 1 S. Pet. ii. 23, 24; Heb. xi. 36.—*Quesnel.*

How is a true believer humbled at the consideration of this inconceivable abasement of the Son of God! Oh, the incomprehensible prodigy both of Divine love and human wickedness!—*Rambach.*

V. 65.—Of all the fatal effects of sin, none looks so dreadfully, none strikes so just an horror into considering minds, as that every sinful action a man does naturally disposes him to another; and that it is hardly possible for him to do anything so ill, but that it proves a preparative and introduction to the doing of something worse. As temptation brings a man to sin, so sin also brings him to temptation. 2 Tim. iii. 13.—*Dr. South.*

V. 66.—*As soon as it was day.* I was ever distrustful of the success of that business, which I undertook, before I recommended myself and my affairs to God in my private morning prayers. Ps. cxliii. 8.—*Sir M. Hale.*

V. 69.—How will the wicked "mourn, when they look upon Him, whom they have pierced!" Those wounds, which were at first opened to heal their souls, shall now open their mouths, and call for vengeance on them. Christ's eyes, saith S. John, will now become flames of fire, and such, as will certainly consume them; His

"feet, like fine brass," burning in a furnace, and cannot but destroy them. Well may the wicked "call upon the rocks to cover them, and the mountains to hide them;" since the Presence of the Lamb will be infinitely more dreadful than the presence of the fiercest lion. S. Matt. xxviii. 3–5.—*March.*

V. 69, 71.—The question, which they put captiously to our Master, the Lord Jesus, I have reason, O my soul, to put to thee in good earnest—"Art thou a child of God, or not?" If thou art, what mean the vanities, thou dotest upon? What means that fondness of the world, that fills the channels of thy heart? . . *We ourselves have heard, &c.* What these men say maliciously of Christ, God may too truly say of thee, O my soul; "*What need is there of any further witness,* when thine own mouth bears witness against thee?" Wert thou to appear before the great Tribunal at this instant, how justly might God condemn thee by thy own confessions! xix. 22; S. James iii. 2.—*Dr. Horneck.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 1.—It is not for nothing, that we have the name of the Roman judge expressed (in the Creed), under whom He suffered: though it is nothing to his credit, yet it is to the credit of the Divine Wisdom; even this; considering the nature and end of Christ's death, it being to satisfy a pronounced sentence of justice, though for others, it was a very agreeable circumstance, that He should not be suddenly or tumultuously murdered, but be judicially, though unjustly, condemned. Acts iv. 27.—*Abp. Leighton.*

As they gave up Christ, the Saviour of all, to the soldiers of the Romans, so shall they, in just requital, be given up to the Roman power, and consumed by their hands. Isa. xxx. 2, 3.—*S. Cyril.*

V. 5.—They say not in the preterperfect tense, "He hath stirred up the people," but in the present tense, *He doth stir up the people;* signifying that His whole life was seditious. . . By the very mentioning of *Galilee,* they desire to provoke Pilate, and make him an enemy to Christ; for the Galileans, above others, were prone to sedition, and impatient of the Roman yoke. xiii. 1; Acts v. 37.—*Edw. Leigh.*

There was perhaps some peculiar fitness, that, as the kingdom belonged to "the poor in spirit," so it should go forth from the despised *Galilee,* as it was the kingdom of

One, whose throne was on Calvary, and the title thereon was "Jesus of Nazareth." 1 Cor. i. 25.—*Is. Williams.*

V. 6.—The word *Galilee*, happening to be thrown out by the Jewish rabble before Pilate in their cry against our Lord, occasioned the sending Him to Herod; in which the mystery of His being judged by Jews and Gentiles received its completion. Thus a mere accident in appearance procured the completion of the prophecy. Ps. cxxxix. 3.—*Pascal.*

V. 7.—Thus it was to be, say the fathers, to toss Christ between Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate, that He might be reviled by four slanderous judges, as His glory should be revealed in the Gospel by four Evangelists: yea, Pilate and Herod interchangeably made another mystery, flat against themselves. For Herod clad our Saviour *in a white shining robe*, says S. Luke, as the ancients read it (Ver. 11): Pilate did alter the colour, and made it *purple*, says S. Matthew (xxvii. 28); to express against their own corrupt proceedings, that "His Soul was white with innocency, and His Body dyed purple with Passion;" according to that, which Solomon spoke mystically of Christ, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys," the white lily of the valleys in His sanctified life, the red rose of Sharon in His bloody sufferings. Cant. ii. 1.—*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 8.—One would apprehend, that Herod was in that most fearful state, into which persons sometimes fall, when they have had their feelings once excited on the subject of religion, but still kept their vices, and who still

continued to entertain an interest and curiosity in matters of religion, having lost godly fear. Acts xxiv. 25–27.—*Is. Williams.*

Whosoever now asks for *miracles*, that he may believe, is himself a mighty miracle; as one, who refuses to believe, when the whole world around him does so.—*S. Augustine.*

When God affords the ordinary preaching of the Gospel, He doth not use to make miracles. When Israel was in the wilderness, then God gave them bread from Heaven, and clave the rocks to give them drink; but when they came to Canaan, where they had the ordinary means of subsistence, the Manna ceased. xvi. 29–31.—*Flavel.*

V. 9.—The ordering of the tongue is a rare gift, and few attain unto it. . . The general rule to direct us therein is the Law of God. We are commanded to seek the glory of God in the first Table, and, in the second, the good of our neighbours. When thy speech therefore will serve, either for God's glory, or the good of thy neighbour, then speak: if it serve for neither, then be silent. Rom. xiv. 13; Col. iv. 6.—*Wm. Perkins.*

That we may not betray ourselves, it is necessary to learn the art of silence. He, who knows not how to be silent, knows not how to speak. Ps. cxli. 3.—*Zoroaster.*

V. 10.—*Vehemently accused Him.* What could they accuse Thee of, Thou King of Saints? All, that they could charge Thee with, was that Thou hadst healed the sick, &c. . . Envy draws the goodness, it sees in

others, with a very black and sour face; and, because itself springs from hell, derives the sweetest actions of its neighbours from the same original. Oh, my Lord, do but in my soul, what Thou hast done in Judæa, and I will own Thee, as the Author and fountain of my happiness! Let envy and strife die in my soul, that confusion and every evil work may die there too; and my heart may become a habitation of peace, for the Prince of Peace to rest in for ever. S. Matt. xxvii. 18; Rom. i. 29.—*Dr. Horneck.*

V. 11.—So does Thy wisdom, O Lord, disappoint the curious; and so they bear themselves, when disappointed. They seek not to see Thee to save their souls, but to gratify their curiosity; and, if their humour be crossed, grow proud and insolent. O glorious Jesus! whose clear and perfect vision is our only felicity, make Thou our whole lives here to be nothing else, but a long and earnest desire to see Thee; that, when we see Thee, our joy may be full. Ex. xxxiii. 18; Ps. xxvii. 4.—*Austin.*

Set Him at nought. Let us receive Christ, take Him, and take a pattern by Him; that, as he was, so we may be troubled for our sins, that we may mingle our tears with His blood, drag our sin to the bar, accuse and condemn it, revile and spit in its face, at the fairest presentment it can make; and then nail it to the cross, that it may languish and faint by degrees, and give up the ghost, and die in us; and then let us lie down in peace, in His grave, and expect a glorious Resurrection to Eternal life. Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14.—*Farindon.*

V. 14.—There is no word or action, but may be taken with two hands; either with the right hand of charitable construction, or, the sinister interpretation of malice and suspicion; and all things succeed, as they are taken. To construe an evil action well, is but a pleasing and profitable deceit for myself; but to misconstrue a good thing, is a terrible wrong to myself, the action, and the author. xx. 20; S. Matt. vii. 12.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 16.—It is dangerous to seek for expedients, when we should do our Duty. xvi. 3, 4; Gal. ii. 11–14.—*Bp. Wilson.*

It is an unhappy policy, and always unhappily applied, to imagine, that classes of men can be recovered and reconciled by partial concessions, or granting less, than they demand. 1 Cor. xi. 16.—*Lord Clarendon.*

V. 21.—*Crucify Him, crucify Him!*—The reiteration shows the vehemency of their rage against Him, as if they would have had Him *twice* crucified. This they could not do; this we may do: we may "Crucify the Son of God *afresh*, and put Him to an open shame," by our apostasy from the truth, whereby we seem to pronounce Him an infamous person, who has deceived our expectations, and to be deserving of death. It is awful to think what sin is in our power. We may cause Christ to have "died in vain;" we may cause Him to die "afresh." Our guilt may exceed the guilt of those, who misled by others, and not knowing what they did or desired, cried out, *Crucify Him, crucify Him!* O Lord, keep us from *falling away*, after we have been enlightened, and have received the Holy Ghost! Heb. vi. 5–7; Gal. ii. 21.—*J. Ford.*

V. 23.—Most sure it is, that, when men's affections do form their opinions, they are in defence of error more earnest a great deal than, for the most part, sound believers in the maintenance of the Truth. Acts xix. 34.—*Hooker.*

V. 25.—*Whom they had desired.* At the dreadful Day of doom, the greatest part of the evidence, that Satan will bring against careless sinners, is the neglect of their serving the Lord Jesus; when he shall say, "O Eternal Judge, I never benefited these persons, I never endured labour and pain to redeem them, and yet they have followed me. I no sooner tempted them to evil, than they obeyed me: Thou camest from heaven, and didst endure many hardships in the world to win them; and yet they never followed Thee; Thou didst shed Thy most precious Blood to save them; and yet they would never worship Thee." 2 Sam. xviii. 13; Rev. xii. 10.—*S. Cyprian.*

What can be more reproachful, what more intolerable, than to set a vile pleasure above the Infinite Majesty and Goodness of God? Is not this less excusable, than the dishonour offered Jesus by the Jews, when they preferred *Barabbas?* No doubt, however we may think of the matter, the sinner hath less to allege for his own perverseness, than the very worst of those Jews. They knew not the value and dignity of the Person, refused by them (1 Cor. ii. 8); but the sinner knows this, and yet does it. They rejected Jesus once; but he does it often, daily, and hourly, even as often as any temptation offers, and he yields up his consent to it. And, if this con-

sideration be duly weighed, it is no wonder, that God should revenge this dishonour severely, that He should give men up to the damnation they have chosen, and not be reconciled to those, who, all their life long, have treated Him after so unworthy and contemptuous a manner. Prov. i. 24–31.—*Parsons.*

V. 26.—*They laid the Cross.* How happy is it to practise mortification of mind and will! But of all such mortifications, those of our own choosing are nothing comparable to our meekly accepting those, which God sends. Ps. xl. 10.—*Bonnell.*

Simon was thus compelled to carry our Saviour's Cross, to show the weakness, whereunto the burden of our sins brought Him, and what must be every Christian's case, who goeth *out of the field* of this world towards the heavenly Jerusalem. S. Matt. xiii. 38.—*Bp. Bayly.*

Many persons seem to bear a Cross *before* Jesus, making their afflictions the ground of their future hope; and many bear a Cross alone, *without Jesus,* unsustained by faith and the consolations of the Gospel. We must humbly bear the Cross *after Jesus;* and we must *so* "*Suffer with Him,*" as members of His mystical Body, "that we may also be glorified *together.*" xiv. 27; Rom. viii. 18.—*J. Ford.*

V. 27.—If David, lamenting the death of Saul and Jonathan, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with other delights; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel;" much rather may I say, "Children of Zion, weep over Jesus,

who clothed you with Righteousness and garments of Salvation?" v. 34, 35.—*Flavel.*

Know, that they are not tears, but pearls, that thus fall from your eyes, dearly precious to the Almighty, and carefully reserved in His casket, for the decking of your soul to all Eternity. Know, that even the Lord Jesus was "a man of sorrows;" and that He bedewed Jerusalem with His tears, ere He watered it with His blood. Ps. lvi. 8.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 28.—*Weep not for Me.* The style of the Gospel is admirable in a thousand different views; and in this, amongst others, that we meet there with no invectives, on the part of the historians, against Judas, or Pilate, nor against any of the enemies, or the very murderers of their Lord. Verse 9; Acts i. 16; xix. 37; S. Jude 9.—*Pascal.*

The tears of those, we love, do either slacken our hearts, or wound them. Acts xxi. 13.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 32.—It was a hard suffering, that He suffered *for* wicked men. It was more hard, that He suffered *of* wicked men; and the most hardest of all was, that He suffered *with* wicked men, and the same death, that wicked men and murderers do suffer. xxii. 52.—*Bp. Cuthbert Tunstall.*

V. 33.—The very Cross was the tribunal of Christ; for the Judge was placed in the middle; one thief, who believed, was set free; the other, who reviled, was condemned: which signified what He was already about to do with the quick and dead, being about to set some on His *right hand*, and some on His *left*. S. Matt. xxv. 33.—*Bp. Hall.*

V. 34.—My thoughts, O Lord, shall follow Thee to the Cross. Methinks, I see how Thou art going to die. Thou lookest back on Thine enemies, and, notwithstanding all their affronts, offerest them mercy. O incomprehensible goodness! Even then, when Thou art lifted up to the infamous tree, Thou drawest, and invitest all men to Thee. Thou preachest on the Cross; and Thy very wounds are sermons to the children of men; and Thy blood, trickling down, is an exhortation to repentance. Surely it is good for me to adhere unto Thee, and to count it death to be separated from Thee. Rom. v. 7, 8.—*Dr. Horneck.*

What became of our Saviour's reed and of His robe, we find in Holy Scripture; they were taken from Him by the soldiers; but it is not written, whether any man took on him the Crown of thorns, as if that were our share, or any man's else, who is goaded with true compunction. And, to say truth, all the sins, which we do commit, let us make the best of them, are but thorns and briars; but, if we confess them in humility, and ask pardon in tears and contrition, then they are a Crown of thorns. Gen. iii. 18.—*Bp. Hacket.*

V. 35.—If Christ, when He was reproached, had come down from the Cross, giving place to those, who insulted over Him, where had the virtue of patience been? He rather awaited His own time, endured reproaches, put up with mockings, maintained a perfect patience; and He, who refused to *come down from the Cross,* came up from the grave; and that was a greater matter to arise from the grave, than to descend from the Cross; to destroy death by rising, than to save life by descending. Rev. i. 9.—*S. Gregory.*

V. 37.—Let us not say to Christ with the Jews, "Come down from the Cross;" but let us fasten ourselves to His Cross.—*Sutton.*

V. 38.—Then were the words of the Psalmist fulfilled, "Tell it out among the heathen, that the Lord is *King!* —*J. Ford.*

V. 41.—It is a great sign of true repentance, when a man approves of the justice of his own punishment. 1 Sam. iii. 18.—*Grotius.*

If we respect his opportunities for attaining faith, his repentance was not late, but early; he took the very first season for it. As soon as he ever discovered Christ and His religion, he readily embraced them. He did not wretchedly cheat himself of his cure, by staking his all on this last moment. Had he at all known Christ, or His truth, before that time, we may infer from his behaviour, that he, who was first in the kingdom of Heaven, would not have been the last among the Apostles. Ps. xviii. 44, 45.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 42.—As Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them," the poor thief grew bold—*Lord, remember me!* xviii. 37, 38.—*Abp. Bramhall.*

He had seen, it is likely, the title over the Cross; "*Jesus, King of the Jews.*" God's Spirit had revealed to him, that His kingdom was in Heaven, into which He should enter after His Resurrection, some short abode first made on earth. He prays to be remembered *then (when Thou enterest into Thy kingdom).* Christ will not suspend him so long, forty days and more: but he shall

that day, that hour almost, from that very place, from that Cross, pass into Paradise. A quick salvation, saith S. Bernard, a short bridge; the Cross to transport him to Heaven. Isa. lxv. 24; Rom. ix. 28.—*Dr. Richard Clerke.*

V. 43.—Humility and faith seem to contend in the character of this man, which shall shine the brightest "to the praise and glory of God." Here is the self-abasement of the sinner, in the free confession of his misdeeds, in his prayer for mercy, in his desire to be no more than simply *remembered:* here also is the faith of the believer, in tracing the two-fold nature of Christ ("*This man*"—"*Lord*"), in looking to Him alone for Salvation, and above all, in making mention of His Spiritual, Glorious, and Eternal Kingdom; then, too, when the Lord was disallowed and rejected of men, given over to the most ignominious of all punishments, about to die, and already to the eye of man, forsaken of His Father, in whom He trusted. This is the Faith and Humility, that saves the soul; and this is the way, in which we must all hope and pray to be *remembered* of the Lord, in our dying hour, now when He *is* come into His kingdom. S. Matt. xv. 21–29.—*J. Ford.*

Christ promised more, than the other asked. This *To-day* is emphatical, and is wont to be added to the mention of benefits, as Jer. i. 10; Eph. iii. 20.—*Edw. Leigh.*

This *To-day* seems to correspond with the instantaneousness ("immediately"—"straightway") with which

our Lord wrought His gracious cures on the bodies of men; while the *Being with Him* points to the perfectness of the recovery and salvation thus granted.—*J. Ford.*

It may possibly deserve your serious observation, that God Almighty did always something extraordinary to grace the several passages of our Saviour's Mediatorship. . . What wonder then, if we find one penitent thief converted, in a miraculous manner, to grace His Crucifixion? Christ was now "triumphing over principalities and powers;" He was now "making a show of them openly on the Cross." That therefore He should bear off the field the prey, which He had taken out of the jaws of the enemy, was no more than was due to the solemnity of His triumphs. Very pretty is S. Austin's remark upon this passage: "Christ," saith he, "in rescuing the poor thief upon the cross, was but quits with the devil; for the devil took man from God out of the midst of Paradise; Christ takes this poor man from Satan, when he was no less than in the very jaws of hell. Satan ruined man on the forbidden tree, and Christ saves him on the cursed tree." How proper for this occasion was such an experiment of this sovereign balsam! There is then no question to be made, but this conversion of the thief was an extraordinary act of grace. It was, saith *Grotius,* "An unusual ray of Divinity, which, darting at this time into the thief's heart, wrought such strange and wonderful repentance in him." . . And, because God did once, in a miraculous manner, convert a poor thief at the hour of death, we must not presume upon such extraordinary mercy. It will better become us to be terrified

at the example of the other thief. We read that he was left unconverted, and his soul dropped into hell, sooner than his carcase was taken from the cross (S. John xix. 32.) If thou dost reject the ordinary means of Grace, which God does plentifully afford thee, thou canst not promise thyself extraordinary mercy at the hour of death; in all probability it will fare with thee, as it did with the unconverted thief.—*March.*

As this was an extraordinary time, Christ being now to be installed into His Kingdom, and crowned with Glory and Honour, so extraordinary things were done. As when Kings are crowned, the streets are richly hung, the conduits run with wine; great malefactors are then pardoned; for then Kings show their munificence and bounty; it is the day of the gladness of their hearts: but let a man come at another time to the conduits, he shall find no wine, but ordinary waters there; let a man be in the jail at another time, he may expect and prepare to be hanged. 2 S. Pet. iii. 16.—*Fenner.*

He, who pardons the sinner, that repents, will grant no repentance to the sinner, that presumes.—*S. Augustine.*

Despair is nothing so dangerous, as presumption: for we read not in all the Scriptures of above three or four thousand, whom roaring despair overthrew; but secure presumption hath sent millions to perdition without any noise. God spared the thief, but not his fellow; God spared one, that no man might despair; God spared but one, that no man should presume—joyful assurance to a sinner, that repents; no comfort to him, that remains impenitent. . . To keep them from the hindrance of

presumption, remember that, as Christ is a Saviour, so Moses is an accuser. Live, therefore, as if there were no Gospel; die, as though there were no Law: pass thy life, as though thou wert under the conduct of Moses; depart this life, as if thou knewest none but Christ, and Him Crucified. Presume not, if thou wilt not perish; repent, if thou wilt be saved. 1 Sam. xviii. 7; S. John v. 45.—*Bp. Bayly.*

V. 44.—Darkness may be regarded, as a judicial sign from heaven of the direst import. It was the ninth of the plagues, inflicted upon Pharaoh: but the Psalmist (Ps. cv.) places it at the head of them all. "He sent darkness and made it dark; and they rebelled not against His Word;" where we are reminded of its peculiarly powerful effect upon the mind and purpose of Pharaoh, exceeding that of all the preceding plagues. These, indeed, are mentioned in their successive order; whereas darkness is taken out of its place, and placed first. Wisd. xviii. 1–4.—*J. Ford.*

V. 45.—At the death of Christ, the most dismal and prodigious sight, that ever was in the world, to supply the senselessness and want of mourning, that was in the Jews, the Sun became a mourner, and *the veil of the Temple was rent in twain,* to show how much the whole creation mourned. And the Church was concerned in that tragedy. xix. 40.—*Bp. Gauden.*

V. 46.—The twofold nature of our Lord, so frequently revealed to our faith, with more or less apparent clearness, in the records of His birth and life, shines out with full

and concentrated lustre at His death. Witness these His last words, in which He addresses the Father, as He is the Son, while He commends His departing spirit, as man: and consider, with the same view, the remonstrance of the penitent thief and his prayer; and also that enlightened confession of the Centurion, "Truly this *man* was *the Son of God.* S. Mark xiii. 39.—*J. Ford.*

In secret exercises of spirit, I have often been affectingly impressed with the thought of two remarkable moments in the history of the world; the one, when "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," myself included; the other, when Christ said, "*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!*" thus virtually bringing me to God.—*Bengel.*

V. 47.—This delivery and surrender of His life and soul, *vivâ voce*, at the very moment or point of death, into His Father's hands, did move the heathen Centurion to say; *Certainly this was a righteous man.* This is in effect the very same, which S. Mark saith; *Of a truth this man was the Son of God.* For, in that the Centurion did acknowledge Him for a *righteous man*, he did, necessarily, in his heart acknowledge Him to be *The Son of God;* because He had so professed of Himself. That righteousness, which the Centurion ascribeth unto Him, was the truth of His confession before Pilate, when He was examined upon this interrogatory, "*Art Thou the Son of God?*" now more fully proved and declared unto the world by the strange manner of His death. S. John xx. 31; 1 Tim. vi. 13.—*Dr. Jackson.*

V. 48.—The Passion of Jesus Christ is rather an amazement, an astonishment, an ecstasy, a consternation, than an instruction.—*Dr. Donne.*

As the Church, under the Law, needed not, so neither doth the Church, under the Gospel, need any other precept, than this one; "See and do," according to the theory, showed thee in the Mount (Exod. xxv. 40); to them, in Mount Sinai; to us, in Mount Calvary. 1 S. Pet. ii. 21.—*Bp. Andrewes.*

V. 49.—Up, O Christian soul, and with the dove make thy nest in the holes of this rock. Behold the wounds of thy Saviour. Come to this Ark, whither all creatures repair to save themselves. Stand, and behold a little with the devout women, the Body of thy Saviour upon the Cross; see Him afflicted from top to toe; see Him wounded in the head, to heal our vain imaginations; see Him wounded in the hands, to heal our evil actions; see Him wounded in the heart, to cure our vain thoughts; see His eyes shut up, which did enlighten the world; see them shut, that thy eyes might be "turned away from beholding vanity;" see those ears, which were wont to hear the joyful hymn of the Cherubins, "Holy, Holy, Holy," now have heard a multitude of reproaches; see that countenance, which was goodly to look upon, is spitted upon and buffeted. The blood of Abel cried, Justice, Justice; but the blood of Christ cried, Mercy, Mercy. Oh, that we had hearts to meditate on the Passion of our Lord.—*Sutton.*

V. 50.—In the midst of temptations, God preserves

this man: though his riches (S. Matt. xxvii. 57), greatness, reputation, and friendship of the grandees did strongly entice him to consent to the death of the Lord Jesus; yet he would not. . . To *wait for the Kingdom of God* is the way to resist and overcome temptations. He, that is resolved not to lose his share in God's Kingdom hereafter, will not stand upon his losses and crosses here; for he knows that the future Kingdom will recompense all. . . Oh, my Jesus! Give me a clearer sight of Thy kingdom; represent its beauties to my mind in lively characters, that my admiration of this present world may decay, and I may be content to sell all for the pearl of great price, that is set before me. Rom. viii. 18; Heb. xi. 15, 16; xii. 2, 3.—*Dr. Horneck.*

V. 53.—A virgin-grave, like, as S. Augustine says, to the womb, in which He was conceived; but, though *Never man was laid there before*, yet *hereafter* all the faithful, who "die in the Lord," shall be put to bed in this grave, until the world's end, when He shall call them out of the dust unto Himself. Ruth i. 16, 17.—*J. Ford.*

V. 56.—Our Saviour calls the funeral *preparation*, which a devout woman made for Him, "A good work;" and so it was in the Christian Church always accounted. *Lactantius* calls it "The last and greatest office of piety." "There is nothing," says *S. Ambrose*, "more excellent, than to do good to them, that cannot repay it; to rescue the partners of our nature from fowls of the air and beasts of the earth; and this, 1. Upon the consideration of their original, as being made after God's Image, which

cannot be misused, but the abuse will be reflected upon Him, after whose similitude we are made. 2. In consideration of what they lately were, "Temples of the Holy Ghost," and receptacles of rational and noble souls. 3. In consideration of what they shall be again at the Resurrection, when the Voice of God shall awake them, and raise them up from those beds of earth, wherein we decently lay them to rest. 2 Sam. xxi. 10; 1 Kings xiii. 31.—*Dr. Lake.*

Sunday, in our rest from bodily labour and employment in the thoughts it suggests, the prospects it opens, the hope it confirms, is a day taken from time, and made a portion of Eternity. Ps. cxviii. 24.—*Adam.*

We are now once more outside the burial gate, under our own roof, and returned to the necessary occupations of this vain and shadowy life. But we feel more sensible, than ever, that things are rapidly preparing us for the time, when these mortal bodies must be borne back through that gate. "Blessed be the Name of the Lord." Eccl. xii. 1–8.—*Bengel.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 1.—The seventh day is ended; the Lord was buried; a return is made to the first day; the Lord is raised. The Lord's Resurrection promised us an eternal day, and did consecrate unto us the Lord's day. 1 S. Pet. i. 3, 4.—S. *Augustine.*

Receive every day, as a resurrection from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every rising sun with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen it, and all things, new created on your account: and, under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify the Lord. Ps. lxv. 8.—*Wm. Law.*

V. 2.—Happy stone! at whose removal not only was the sepulchre unclosed, but our hearts were opened to believe. 1 S. Pet. i. 3–5.—*Pet. Chrysologus.*

V. 3.—*The Lord Jesus.* This title is very pertinent and suitable to His Resurrection. For, however this glorious title was due to Him, even from His Birth, yet, it is observable, it is never completely and strictly given to Him, till after His Resurrection. *Lord* He is called, and *Jesus* He is called, before; but, in all the Gospel, you never meet with these, all in one appellation, till His Resurrection. The first place, that names Him *The Lord Jesus,* is here. After His rising again it is said, *They found not the body of the Lord Jesus.* There it begins;

never afore: but then, after, frequently. By His Resurrection He was "Declared to be the Son of God;" then made known to be "Lord and Christ." Then this beautiful wreath was put upon His head and publicly proclaimed; *The Lord Jesus Christ.* Rom. i. 3, 4.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

V. 4.—S. Matthew mentions here but one Angel; S. Mark no more; S. Luke two. S. Matthew's Angel sate upon the stone, which was rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre; S. Mark's sate on the right side of the sepulchre within; S. Luke's Angels stood by the women, as they stood perplexed in the sepulchre. And S. John speaks of two Angels more, the one sitting at the head, the other at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain. And yet in all these diversities no contradiction. The story runs smoothly thus. These pious women, mentioned here, come early to the sepulchre to embalm their Lord's Body; whilst they yet stood without for fear, this Angel in the text (S. Matt. xxviii. 5), that sate before the door upon the stone he had rolled away, invites them to come in, where they were no sooner entered, but they saw a second Angel sitting, who entertained them almost with the same words; and is he, remembered by *S. Mark.* When they had awhile perused the bowels of the grave, and found nothing there but the desolate linen, in which their Lord's Body had been wrapped, being somewhat perplexed at the business, they were comforted by two other Angels, which immediately appeared to resolve their doubts, and sent them to the disciples to tell the news; and these are spoken of by *S. Luke:*

whereupon away they haste; only Mary Magdalene returns again with S. Peter and S. John, who, having looked and entered into the grave, away they go; but she stands still without, and weeps, till two other Angels, as *S. John* relates, show forth themselves to stop her tears and divert her moans, and show her her Lord standing at her back. Thus we need no *Synecdoches*, no strained figures to make things agree. But thus you see, Angels are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i.). They stand by us, when we think not of them; they speak to us often, when we do not mind them. In the very *grave*, in our deepest melancholies, in our saddest condition; at the *head*, and at the *feet* of them, they take their places, and sit to comfort us. But especially when we descend into the grave to seek our Lord; when we cannot be satisfied, unless we may even die with Him; when we are crucified and dead to the world, but Him; when our only business is both in life and death to be with Him; then to be sure we shall not want Angels to attend us; at every turn they stand ready for us; upon all occasions they are still at hand. A strong consolation this in all afflictions: a brave encouragement in all good undertakings: a good *item* too for our good behaviour to carry ourselves well, soberly, modestly, piously in all conditions, "because of the Angels," as the Apostle speaks, that thus stand about us, that are every where so near us. 1 Cor. xi. 10.—*Dr. Mark Frank.*

If the Law was given "By the disposition of Angels" (Acts vii. 53), how much more must "A multitude of

the Heavenly host" have been nigh, when that *Stone was rolled away*, when the risen Redeemer of mankind "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel?" (2 Tim. i. 10.) The Apostle tells us that we are come "to an innumerable company of Angels" (Heb. xii. 22). Here, at their *Lord's sepulchre*, doubtless they were; and some few of them were made visible, for most gracious purposes, to mortal eye.—*J. Ford.*

V. 5.—Ah, ye, who, instead of sitting, like Mary Magdalene, at the Redeemer's sepulchre, weeping and waiting for Him, showing that her heart was there, though the Body of the Lord was not; . . ye, who are deceiving yourselves on the brink of Eternity, seeking happiness where it cannot be found—the *living among the dead*—I ask, what grounds have ye to expect, that God will bring the morning after the night; that He will send consolation and joy into your hearts, which have departed from the fountain of purity and bliss to seek satisfaction in the vain conversation, dissipating amusements, and corrupting pleasures of the world? Prov. x. 28.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 6.—*Christ is risen.* That concerneth us alike. The Head is got above the water; the root hath received life and sap; the first branches are lift up and consecrate; we, no less than they, as His members, His branches, His fold, recover to this hope. Eph. iv. 15; Rom. xi. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 23.—*Bp. Andrewes.*

Some one of the Fathers has observed, that the reading

of the Scriptures, though sometimes apparently unproductive at the time, if it be honestly pursued, will not fail, sooner or later, to produce its fruit. Isa. lv. 10, 11. S. John ii. 22.—*A. Knox.*

It is not sufficiently considered how much more we need recollection than information. S. John xiv. 26; 2 S. Pet. i. 13; iii. 1.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 11.—Some receive comfort suddenly, and in an instant they pass from midnight to bright day, without any dawning betwixt. Others receive consolation by degrees, which is not poured, but dropped into them by little and little. This is to show, that, as in God's proceedings there is no variableness, such as may import Him mutable, or impotent; so, in the same, there is very much variety, to prove the fullness of His power and freedom of His pleasure. S. Mark viii. 24; S. James i. 17.—*Th. Fuller.*

V. 13.—*That same day.* That, which some object, concerning the two disciples, *travelling* to Emmaus, maketh nothing to what I say; because it was the day of the Resurrection, or first Day of the week; but much for it. Neither are Christians obliged to such a strict rest on the Lord's day, as the Jews were upon their Sabbath: much less to such a rest, as the Pharisees had introduced, who would not allow a man to roast an apple, or peel an onion, or kill a flea, upon the Sabbath, for fear of profaning it. Works of necessity, piety, and charity, even upon the Sabbath, did always carry with them a dispensation from Heaven; and upon the Lord's Day in a greater latitude,

with less cause of scruple. It might be, those two disciples were employed by the Church in that doubtful time, and sent to the house of Cleopas, which was in Emmaus; and so these three favourable requisites, piety, necessity, and charity, might concur in that voyage. This we are sure of; their discourse was such, as might well become those, who were then Sanctifying the Lord's Day.—*Abp. Bramhall.*

V. 14.—It is strange, that that, which is everybody's great concern, should be nobody's discourse. vi. 45.—*Bp. Wilson.*

Nor should we be any ways content in our conversation that what we say is innocent. It should be our desire that it may be edifying to ourselves and others. We should watch for decent opportunities of introducing useful reflections; and, if a pious friend attempt to do it, we should endeavour to second it immediately. And, in pauses of conversation, it may not be improper to lift up our hearts unto God. Eph. iv. 29.—*Dr. Doddridge.*

V. 15.—*While they communed, Jesus drew near.* A remarkable fulfilment of the promise, made to the Communion of Saints in dark days of prevailing sins and trouble. "Then they, that feared the Lord, spake often one to another," &c. Mal. iii. 16. But why is the private intercourse of Christians so rarely sanctified in this manner, to the furtherance of their mutual comfort? Why do they so seldom "speak one to another?" Is it not, because the Word of Christ does not *dwell in us richly in all wisdom?* Some other subject has usurped and engrossed our thoughts. The Kingdom of Heaven is

not "within us," as it ought to be. We have allowed Satan, or the world, to rob us of our secret treasure, more or less; so that we have little, or even nothing at hand, for "the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers." Col. iii. 16.—*J. Ford.*

V. 17.—Pascal, in his chapter on the types and figures, has drawn with his usual accuracy the parallel between Joseph, and our Lord. This parallel he limits to points of resemblance in matters of history. In tenderness of feeling and warmth of sympathy, Joseph remarkably typifies to us our compassionate High Priest: and the parallel is here before us. "Wherefore look ye so *sadly* to-day?" was the gentle inquiry, addressed by Joseph to his fellow prisoners (Gen. xl. 7). *Why are ye sad?* said the Blessed Jesus to His brethren. Heb. iv. 15.—*J. Ford.*

Sad. Verse 21. If I was to be assured that there is no God, or that He does not govern the world, nor regard what is doing in it, nor hear prayer, nor promise immortality and prepare us for it, how would it affect me? Should I think myself undone, as being deprived of all my hope and comfort, my best friend, and the dearest object of my heart? S. John xx. 2, 13.—*Adam.*

V. 18.—*One of them.* That S. Luke was his companion appears probable. Perhaps, there are some parts of the history of this transaction, which bear the marks of a writer, who was personally present.—*Bp. Sandford.*

V. 20, 21.—It is the proper work of faith to look on both sides of God's dispensation, and of our own condition. Sense and reason look on the dark side alone. Faith sees on both sides. "Come, my beloved brethren,"

said Latimer to his fellow-prisoners, when he went to the stake, "though we pass through the fire to-day, yet we shall light such a candle in England, as shall never be put out." 1 S. Pet. v. 1.—*Wm. Bridge.*

Christ rose early *the third day:* to have lain longer might have bred doubt of His rising; to have risen sooner, of His dying. Eph. i. 8.—*C. Sutton.*

V. 22.—I cannot but think that God had a peculiar design in ordaining the record of facts of this kind in the Scripture. It is in the weakness and feebleness of human nature that God often manifests His power. . . Satan made an attack on the weaker sex, and succeeded fatally. Christ seems to have determined to magnify His strength and grace in their weakness; and has, perhaps, therefore presented us (not only in the Bible, but in the history of His Church), with examples of women, who by "faith received their dead raised to life again; and of others, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better Resurrection." Grace then is most distinguished, when nature comes least to its aid. 1 Cor. i. 25–29.—*R. Cecil.*

V. 24.—*Him they saw not.* All the heirs of glory have not assurance ordinarily within them, and scarcely any, at all times, equally clear. Some travel on in a cloudy covert day, and get home by it, having so much light, as to know their way; and yet do not at all see the bright and full sunshine of assurance; others have it breaking forth, at some times, and anon, under a cloud; and some, more constantly. S. John iii. 8.—*Abp. Leighton.*

Be not disheartened, as if comfort would not come at all, because it comes not all at once; but patiently attend God's leisure: they are not styled the swift, but "*the sure* mercies of David" (Isa. lv. 3, and lviii. 8). And the same prophet says, "The glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward:" this we know comes up last, to secure, and make good, all the rest. Be assured, when Grace patiently leads the front, Glory at last will be in the rear. Ps. lxxxiv. 12; Hab. ii. 3.—*Th. Fuller.*

V. 25.—*Fools and slow of heart.* He reproves them of folly, in the state of their minds; and of slowness, in the state of their affections.—*Caietan.*

V. 25, 26.—Deprive Christianity of the Atonement, and "the salt has lost its savour." Deprive the Atonement of its explanatory cause and antecedent necessity; and not only is Holy Scripture no longer honestly comprehensible, but we are no longer comprehensible to our own selves. The wants and consciousness of man are still unprovided for. S. John xiii. 8; 1 S. John i. 7.—*J. Miller.*

V. 27.—Who can read this, without wishing to have overheard that expository discourse, which, as the disciples said of it afterwards, *made their hearts burn within them?* Such a discourse is the Epistle to the Hebrews, to those, whose hearts are open to understand it; not conceived in the same words, perhaps, nor laid down exactly in the same method; but consisting of the same matter, and all tending to produce the same effect. All the doctrine, contained in this Epistle, relates to one, or other, of these three heads; first, to the Person of the Son of God, as it

had been described in the Old Testament; secondly, to the religion of the Gospel, as being the same under both Testaments; thirdly, to the Church of Israel, as a figure of the Church of Christ. Rev. xix. 10.—*Wm. Jones.*

The knowledge of Christ is the very marrow and kernel of all the Scriptures, the scope and centre of all Divine Revelations. Both Testaments meet in Him, and how they both harmonize, and sweetly concentre in Jesus Christ, it is the chief scope of that excellent Epistle to the Hebrews to discover; for we may call that Epistle, "The sweet harmony of both Testaments." Heb. xiii. 20, 21.—*Flavel.*

V. 28.—It is said of our Lord, *He made, as though He would have gone further;* not, as though He therein acted deceitfully; for not every pretended act is deception; but, when there is no true meaning in the pretence, then it is deception. . . But what truth did our Lord convey by making, as if He would go further, when He accompanied the disciples, who knew Him not, opening to them the Scriptures? What, except that men may arrive at the knowledge of Him through the exercise of hospitality? That, when He Himself should have departed from men, and ascended far above all Heavens, yet that He should be in such sort with them, who minister to His servants, that, when they shall begin to say, "Lord, when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in" (as if He was afar off, and thus they had no opportunity to do this), He shall answer, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (S. Matt. xxv. 38–40). Whoever thus is "taught in the

Word, and communicates in all good things with him that teacheth," *constrains* Christ, that He shall *abide with him:* as saith the Apostle, "Let him, that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him, that teacheth, in all good things" (Gal. vi. 6). Now the two disciples were taught by Him in the Word, when He opened to them the Scriptures; and for that they exercised hospitality; they knew *Him* "in the breaking of bread," whom they had not known in the exposition of Scripture. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Rom. ii. 13.—*S. Augustine.*

Hereafter we shall have a full view of the Lord; as yet we must content ourselves with these glimpses of Glory. Our Joseph still speaks to us by an interpreter. He shows Himself to us, not "as He is," but as He wills. He "stands yet behind the wall, looks forth at the windows" only; shows Himself "through the lattice;" and at these chinks, and crevices, let us labour to behold Him. Isa. xlv. 15.—*Bp. Brownrig.*

The grief of the Saints here is, not so much for the changes of outward things, as of their inward comforts. "The hour is sweet; but the stay short." Jer. xvi. 8; Ps. xxx. 7, 8.—*Abp. Leighton.*

V. 29.—*Constrained Him.* At first our prayers may seem not to be heard, as the Angels said to Lot, they would "abide in the street all night," and as Christ, when invited by the two disciples, *made, as though He would have gone farther.* . . By delaying the return of our prayers, God designs to try our love, and train us to perseverance, not to reject our petitions, and to hide His

face from us for ever. When Lot earnestly *pressed* the Angels, they went and tarried with him: and the two disciples *constrained* Jesus. Faint hearts and feeble hands obtain not the kingdom of heaven, which "suffereth violence," and must be taken by a "holy force." xvii. 1; Gen. xxxii. 26; Heb. xii. 12.—*Bp. Horne.*

V. 31.—I believe that there was something in the manner of His breaking the bread, and helping and giving it to them, which was his own appointed means of *opening their eyes* to the recognition of Him. But we must not suppose any reference to, much less any celebration of, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Neither of these disciples was present at its institution; and, certainly, it had never been celebrated since. ix. 16.—*Alford.*

V. 32.—*By the way.* The treasures of Divine wisdom are almost infinite; and it fares with those, that study them, as with a traveller, when he ascends a rising ground; every new step enlarges his horizon, and presents new countries, new pleasures, to his eye. S. Mark viii. 24, 25. —*Dr. Lucas.*

V. 33.—Five sundry times appeared He this day. To Mary Magdalene, S. Mark xvi. 9; to the women coming from the sepulchre, S. Matt. xxviii. 9; to the two, that went to Emmaus; to S. Peter (ver. 23); and here now to the eleven, and *them, that were with them,* S. John xx. 19. The two first, to women; the three last to men: so both sexes. To S. Peter and to Mary Magdalene; so, to sinners of both sexes. To the eleven, as the Clergy; to them, that were with them, as the laity: so to both estates. Abroad at Emmaus, at home, here; betimes, and now

late; when they were scattered severally; and now jointly, when they were gathered together: that no sex, sort, estate, place, or time expected; but, as rising from above at His birth, rising from beneath at His Resurrection, He visited all. Ps. xix. 5, 6; cxlv. 9.—*Bp. Andrewes.*

V. 34.—Is He not rather raised, than *risen?* Was it by His own power, or another's? By His own surely; for all the Evangelists say unanimously, *He is risen.* Indeed, it is said (Acts iv. 10), that "God *raised* Him from the dead." It was so: for He was God Himself; "He and His Father One;" so God raised Him, and yet He raised Himself: was not raised, as the widow's son, or Jairus' daughter, or His friend Lazarus; but so, as none other ever were, or shall be *raised* and *risen;* and yet so risen, as not raised by any, but Himself. S. John v. 19; x. 30.—*Dr. Mark Frank.*

Having kept company with the Apostles and first believers in standing by the Cross weeping, upon Good Friday, and kept a fast upon the Saturday following, to comply with the Apostles and Catholick Church, who were that day sad and pensive, because their Lord was taken away from them; we are directed this Day to rejoice with them for the rising again of our Lord, and to express our joy in the same words, that they then did, and the Church ever since hath done—"*Christ is risen!*" the usual morning salutation this Day all the Church over; to which the answer in some places was, "*Christ is risen indeed;*" and, in others this, "*And hath appeared unto Simon!*" Ps. xxx. 5; lxxxv. 1–3; cxxvi. 6.—*Bp. Sparrow.*

The Lord is risen indeed was such a cordial to them, that it came to be prescribed to succeeding Christians, as an antidote against all worldly fears; "*The Lord is risen*" growing into a common form of salutation among them, whereby they were wont to congratulate and give joy, one to another. 1 S. Pet. i. 3, 4. —*Dean Young.*

V. 35.—Their eyes were not opened in hearing the Scriptures, and the Commandments of God, but in their doing; that is, in their inviting Him to tarry with them, and in their placing food before Him: for not "The hearers of the law, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii. 13). God is more readily known in works of charity, and of mercy, as in hospitable deeds and such like, than in reading and disputing about the Scripture. The Truth is better understood by our doing, than merely hearing: it is exhibited to us through the work, rather than the word. S. John vii. 17; S. James i. 25; 1 Cor. viii. 1–3.—*Ludolphus.*

By this dialogue you may see that Christ is especially *known* in the Scriptures; and yet, not in the Scriptures, except He first *open our eyes,* and *break,* and *give* to each one the bread of Life; and in the conclusion, or epilogue following, you may see likewise the fruit of interpreting Scripture—how the Ministry of the Word maketh the fire of God's Spirit to *burn,* first in ourselves, and then, afterwards, to shine toward other: as the two disciples here, so soon as their eyes were opened to see Christ, instantly *The same hour they rose, and returned to Jerusalem, and found, &c.* Rom. x. 17; S. John i. 41, 45; iv. 29.—*Dean Boys.*

V. 36.—*Peace be unto you.* This is indeed the most valuable benefit of Christ's Resurrection; for by Christ all things are renewed and changed; corruption is changed into incorruption; that, which was transitory, into that, which is Eternal; our filthiness into spotless beauty; our grief into joy; our sorrows into triumphs; our sins into righteousness; the Divine anger into mercy; His curses into Blessings; our poverty into riches; our diseases into health; our contempt into honour; our reproach into glory; our disquiet into Everlasting rest; our miseries into pleasures; our death into Life. Now death is the entrance into this happy state, so that temporal death is the entrance into Everlasting Life. Heb. xiii. 20.—*John Arndt.*

V. 40.—His Body was no longer the body of a man in its mortal state; it was the body of a man raised to life and immortality, which was now mysteriously united to Divinity. And, as it was by miracle, that before His death He walked upon the sea, it was now by miracle that, for the conviction of the Apostles, He showed in His Person the marks of His sufferings. Phil. iii. 21.—*Bp. Horsley.*

V. 41.—If thou doubtest of so great wealth and felicity, that is wrought for thee, O man, call to thy mind, that therefore hast thou received into thine own possession the Everlasting Verity, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to confirm to thy conscience the truth of all this matter. Thou hast received Him, if in true faith and repentance of heart thou hast received Him, if in purpose of amendment thou hast received Him, for an everlasting

gage, or pledge, of thy Salvation. Thou hast received His Body, which was once broken, and His Blood, which was shed for the remission of thy sin. Thou hast received His Body, to have within thee the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; for to dwell with thee, to endow thee with Grace, to strengthen thee against thine enemies, and to comfort thee with their Presence. Thou hast received His Body, to endow thee with Everlasting righteousness, to assure thee of Everlasting bliss, and the life of thy soul.—*Homilies.*

Love is the original and source of all the passions, that we feel in our hearts. It is Love, which fears; and Love, which grieves; and Love, which hopes; and Love, which rejoices. There would be none of these, but for some good, which we love; to which these and all the rest of their kindred owe their birth and nourishment. vii. 44–47.—*Bp. Patrick.*

V. 44.—Profane writers usually correct and improve some, that went before; but now, as a certain mark, that these Sacred Authors were all guided by the same Spirit, no one of them for so many ages hath ever opposed, but all approve and build upon, the former. The writings of Joshua confirm those of Moses; the Book of Judges that of Joshua: those of Kings and Chronicles refer you to the more ancient records: one Prophet builds upon another, and Christ approves them all by that known division of *Law, Psalms, and Prophets,* then in use among the Jews. And these are the four external proofs of the Old Testament's authority. Their great and venerable antiquity; the care and caution, used in

writing, receiving, and preserving these Books; the sincerity of the Authors; and their uniform agreement in one Spirit. Acts xxviii. 23.—*Parsons.*

These arguments are no ingenious fabrications of my own, nor are they emblazoned forth with the mere wisdom of man. But these things David sung, Isaiah preached, Zacharias heralded forth, and Moses recorded. 1. S. Pet. i. 20, 21.—*Justin Martyr.*

V. 45.—Whoso giveth his mind to Holy Scriptures with diligent study and burning desire (ver. 32), it cannot be, says S. John Chrysostom, that he should be left without help. For either God Almighty will send him some godly doctor to teach him, . . as He sent His Apostle Philip to declare unto the eunuch (Acts x. 29) the true sense of the Scripture, that he read; or else, if we lack a learned man, to instruct and teach us, yet God Himself from above will give light unto our minds, and teach us those things, that are necessary for us, and wherein we be ignorant. And in another place Chrysostom saith, that "Man's human and worldly wisdom and science is not needful to the understanding of Scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search therefore." "He that asketh shall have; and he, that seeketh, shall find; and he, that knocketh, shall have the door open" (S. Matt. vii.) If we read once, twice, or thrice, and understand not, let us not cease so; but still continue reading, praying, asking of others; and so by still knocking, at the last, the door shall be opened.—*Homilies.*

If the Law of Moses had not anything of a more latent meaning, David would not have said, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy Law!" —*Origen.*

V. 47.—*Christ should suffer—remission of sins preached in His Name.* The Prophetic volume does not speak in figure, as the rites of the Law, but in the more direct oracles of Truth. The Law foreshadowed; the Prophets foretold. This is the difference between those connected members of the predictive economy of Revelation. Nor perhaps shall I exceed the truth, if I state, that there is a discernible progress in all the communications, made concerning this very doctrine of the Atonement. For the prophetic Psalms embrace the sufferings of the Messiah; but we do not read there the expiatory office of those sufferings. That is an addition made by later prophecy. Thus, in one brief view, we have the Atoning Sacrifice, simply foreshadowed in the Law; the sufferings of the Messiah, depicted in the Psalms; His Passion and Atonement together, in the latter prophecy. Isa. liii.; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Zech. xiii. 7.—*Davison.*

The foundation and beginning of holy life is saving *Repentance:* for where there is true repentance there is *Remission of sins;* and, where there is remission of sins, there is the grace of God; and, where there is the grace of God, there is Christ; and where Christ is, there is His merit; and, where there is Christ's merit, there is satisfaction for sins; and, where there is satisfaction for sins, there is righteousness; and, where there is righteousness, there is joy and tranquillity of conscience; and, where there is tranquillity of conscience, there is the Holy Spirit;

and, where the Holy Spirit is, there is the Sacred and Holy Trinity; and, where the Holy Trinity is, there is Eternal Life. Therefore, where there is true Repentance, there is Eternal Life. Acts v. 31; xi. 18; 2 Cor. vii. 10.—*Gerard.*

That Church alone, which first *began* at Jerusalem on earth, will bring us to the Jerusalem in Heaven; and that alone began there, which always embraces "The Faith once delivered to the saints." Whatsoever Church pretendeth to a new beginning, pretendeth at the same time to a new Churchdom; and whatsoever is so new is none. 1 S. John ii. 7.—*Bp. Pearson.*

V. 49.—In completeness, the Gospel of S. Luke must rank first, among the four. The Evangelist begins with the announcement of the birth of Christ's forerunner, and concludes with the particulars of the Ascension; thus embracing the whole great procession of events, by which our Redemption was ushered in, accomplished, and sealed in Heaven. And, by recording the allusion to *The Promise of the Father*, he has introduced, so to speak, a note of passage to that history, in which the fulfilment of that promise, the great result of Redemption, was to be related. i. 3; Acts i. 1–3.—*H. Alford.*

V. 50.—Jacob, before his departure from them, blessed the twelve patriarchs (Gen. xlix.), and "Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death." (Deut. xxxiii.) This *Blessing* of our Lord was of a distinct and far higher character. It was not merely ministerial, nor paternal, nor prophetic: it was the absolute Blessing of His own Divine Eternal Priesthood, "after the order of Melchisedek." For He had now finished His expiatory

sacrifice for sin, after the order of Aaron (S. John xix. 30); and was entering upon His new Melchisedekian Priesthood (as Dr. Hammond calls it, Pract. Cat. B. i. s. 2), when His office was to *Bless.* And how does He Bless us? In giving us His Holy Spirit, and thereby "in turning away every one of us from our iniquities." Acts. iii. 26; Gal. iii. 14, 16; Heb. vii. 11, &c.—*J. Ford.*

V. 51.—He departed, in regard to what belonged to Him, as man; He remained, in what belonged to Him, as God. He departed, in the nature, that is limited to one place; He remained, in that, which is omnipresent.—*S. Augustine.*

V. 52.—The Fathers in the Primitive Church testified their faith in the Resurrection, by standing upright on Easter Sunday and many following days, while they prayed; not only to remember themselves, whither their desires should tend, but also to testify, that this Day is a representation of our blessed rising from the dead. 1 S. Pet. i. 3.—*Bp. Lake.*

V. 53.—I believe, O King of Saints, that among the Saints on earth, whether real or in outward profession only, there ought to be a mutual Catholick participation of all good things, which is the immediate effect of Catholick love. Thou, O God of love, restore it to Thy Church. I believe that all the Saints on earth by profession, ought to communicate one with another in Evangelical Worship, and the same Holy Sacraments, in the same Divine and Apostolical faith, in all offices of corporeal and spiritual charity, in reciprocal delight in each other's salvation, and in tender sympathy, as members of one and the same Body. O God of peace, restore, in

Thy good time, this Catholick Communion, that with one heart and with one mouth, we may all praise and love Thee! O my God, amidst the deplorable divisions of Thy Church, let me never widen its breaches; but give me Catholick Charity to all, that are Baptized in Thy Name, and Catholick Communion with all Christians in desire. Oh, deliver me from the sins and errors, from the schisms and errors of the age. Give me grace to pray daily for the peace of Thy Church, and earnestly to seek it, and to excite all I can to praise and to love Thee! 1 S. John i. 7; Acts ii. 42, 46; Gal. vi. 10; Rom. xii. 9, &c.; 1 Thess. v. 14; Heb. x. 24; 1 Cor. xii. 13, 26.—*Bp. Ken.*

Thus,—whether by the express design of the Holy Spirit, we dare not say,—the Evangelist closes his Gospel, as he began it, in accordance with his own Symbolical character, as the Sacrificial calf. He began by leading us into the Temple; and in the Temple He now leaves us; he began with the Priestly Order and service of Zacharias, preparatory to our Lord's coming, and he ends with the song and the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, in honour of the ascended Saviour, and for our Redemption, perfected even for evermore. Nor should we omit to notice his last word—*Amen.* "The Spirit of wisdom" in the minds of the Evangelists, "was the Spirit of grace and supplication" in their hearts: and so, what they wrote in prayer, we must read in prayer; and not only begin, and continue, but also *end,* all our religious duties and services in an entire dependence on God's gracious acceptance, and with most humble entreaties for the same. *Amen. Amen.* S. Matt. xxviii. 20; S. John xix. 25; Eph, i. 16–33.—*J. Ford.*